

Colorado Historical
Records Advisory Board

Local and State Government Records Program Assessment

1997 Survey Results

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For the

Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board

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Local and State Government Record Program Assessment

1997 Survey Results

Introduction

This report is one of two assessment reports in which the Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board (CHRAB) discusses the status of record programs in the state. It focuses on the current conditions and needs of Colorado's public records custodians. The first report, *Historical Records Repository Assessment* discussed the program needs and concerns of public and private archives, museums, libraries, and historical societies.

As part of its 1982 planning grant, the CHRAB assessed local government records facilities and made several recommendations for the improvements of their records programs. The Board published these recommendations in a report entitled, *Colorado Records Survey*. Staff members of the Colorado State Archives visited city halls and water courts across the state. The staff evaluated water records and their storage facilities, as well as the offices of city clerks in order to determine what impact, if any, rapid growth had had upon these communities in western Colorado.

The current study is broader in scope. The CHRAB attempted, through a mailed survey, to collect information on the records management programs of two groups of government respondents: local and state records officers. The local government records officers consist of four subgroups: county clerk and recorders, county court clerks, municipal clerks and municipal court clerks. State records officers include two subgroups: state department Records Liaison Officers (RLOs) and university and college registrars.

In any one of these professional positions, a records officer is responsible for the creation and maintenance of public records. For instance, the duties of a state RLO may include assisting the State Archives and agency staff with the development of records management policies and procedures, coordinating records management training for agency staff, coordinating an inventory of the agency's records, transferring agency records to the Archives, and developing disposition schedules.

The CHRAB began its survey with the general belief that all survey recipients create and maintain records of both temporary and permanent value. The Board then assumed that most of Colorado's governments were maintaining public records in paper and electronic format, and that state and local governments shared common records program needs and concerns.

An Executive Committee of CHRAB members worked with the project director to develop a survey instrument that focused on the holdings, the administration, and the needs of local and state government record officers. Committee members included, Dr. James E. Hansen a Colorado State University History Professor and the Director of the Colorado Agricultural Archives; Eleanor Gehres, Director of the Denver Public Library Western History and Genealogy Department; John Dale a retired educator; and Joel Barker of the

National Archives and Records Administration. Most of the survey questions came directly from earlier surveys conducted by State Historical Records Advisory Boards (SHRAB) across the country. However, the Committee added a few new questions to address specific issues raised by the survey's pilot-testers.

Methods and Procedures

On November 3, 1997, the CHRAB mailed 556 forms to both local and state records officers. Some state RLOs disseminated an additional forty-two forms to their subdivision records clerks. The county court clerks and the university and college registrars received one follow-up contact. However, due to the rapid return of completed surveys from municipal records clerks and county clerk and recorders, no follow-up contact was made with those subgroups.

Overall, the survey received 317 responses and achieved a decent 61% response rate. Although some of the responses were incomplete, almost all of the questions elicited the intended response. The credit for such a good return goes to the pilot-testers who provided excellent comments on the content of the form. They had a good grasp on the issues of concern to their respective subgroup.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to make a comparison with the 1982 survey results. The previous assessment only evaluated the local government records in thirteen cities and the county water courts. That survey was a field study and the questions focused primarily on issues of security. In contrast, the 1997 assessment asked twenty-nine questions on three specific areas of records management interest: 1) Management of Paper Records, 2) Management of Electronic Records and 3) Program Needs and Services.

Survey Results

The following is a breakdown of the survey responses:

• Table 1

| Respondents | Surveys Sent | Surveys Received |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Municipal Clerks and Court Clerks | 379 | 181 |
| County Clerk and Recorders | 63 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 60 | 30 |
| State Records Liaison Officers (RLOs) | 70 (42 through RLOs) | 58 |
| Registrars | 26 | 12 |

(Note: results for municipal clerks and court clerks were combined in the analysis after it was determined that these two tasks are sometimes combined under one function in CO city halls).

Not every question received 100% response from every respondent. However, the responses appear to give a fair assessment of Colorado's public records, and the concerns of the its record officers.

Findings

Local Governments

The Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board (CHRAB) asked each respondent to prioritize their greatest needs by assigning them a numerical ranking (from one for high priority to three for low priority). The form contained six typical records management needs. To avoid any possible placement bias the Executive Committee arranged the needs alphabetically. Determining a group or subgroup's priorities necessitated counting the number of respondents who selected each need as a high priority, a medium priority, and a low priority. Since there were six needs, respondents could use each ranking more than once. During the analysis, the project researcher discarded all incorrect responses (i.e. responses that were not ranked according to the given priorities).

The following is a list of local government priorities (based on the percentage of respondents selecting the needs as a High priority) and a table of overall responses from which the high priorities are drawn:

- Priority #1 Records Retention Scheduling (46%)
- Priority #2 Preservation of Historical Records (45%)
- Priority #3 Development of Disaster Plan (39%)
- Priority #4 Management of Computer Records (36%)
- Priority #5 Records Storage Space (35%)
- Priority #6 Professional Information & Staff Training (29%)

• Table 2

| Ranked Priority | Number of Respective Responses Per Need | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | Disaster Planning | Computer Records | Preservation | Prof. Info & Training | Retention Scheduling | Storage Space |
| High | 56 of 143 | 54 of 152 | 73 of 163 | 41 of 143 | 68 of 149 | 53 of 150 |
| Medium | 48 of 143 | 55 of 152 | 54 of 163 | 59 of 143 | 38 of 149 | 49 of 150 |
| Low | 39 of 143 | 43 of 152 | 36 of 163 | 43 of 143 | 43 of 149 | 48 of 150 |

Priority #1: Records Retention Scheduling

This first priority need relates to issues of storage and preservation. Although the survey only asked a couple specific retention-related questions, a significant portion of the form asked about record storage issues. The retention and disposition of records should be the core element of any records management program. Records officers should keep records only as long as they are useful for public business or significant research. If records are no longer useful they should be disposed of; otherwise, they take up storage space needed for important records. Furthermore, the staff will have to spend precious time sorting through valueless records to find needed information.

Colorado State Statutes 24-72-101 to 24-72-402 and 24-80-101 to 24-80-111 govern the management of state records or any records of political subdivision of the state, or records of a local government-financed entity. The State Archives handles consent for the disposition of public records through the creation of records retention and disposition schedules. Schedules already exist for most records retained by local governments and State Archives personnel, upon request, can prepare schedules that cover the “unique” records of a local government or state department.

Apparently (based on responses to the first survey question) all local government respondents are aware of the above-mentioned statute. However, the statute does not mandate that local governments use the State Archives retention and disposition schedules, and the Archives does not have a standard retention schedule for local governments. The agency has developed several guidelines, but a county or municipality may develop its own unique schedule (or use one prepared by an organization like the Colorado Municipal League). The local government’s supervisory body must approve the schedule, and the State Archives must give final review and approval before the disposition of any public record. Eighty-three percent of the municipal court clerk respondents, 57 % of the municipal clerks, 83% of the county clerk and recorders, and 97% of the county court clerks use an official retention schedule to determine how long to keep their records.

Based on survey responses, it appears that most of the participating local governments do not support a full or part-time records manager or archivist. Four counties and six municipalities have established archives that oversee both the archival and records management activities for the city/county. The survey revealed that fewer than 50% of the municipal clerks and county clerk and recorders manage their records according to a policy or procedural manual. Only 13% of the municipal clerks and county courts reported that their governments support a records management or archivist position. Thirty-nine percent of the county clerk and recorders and 7% of the municipal court clerks reported the same. Without a professional archivist or records manager on staff, clerks must undertake the task of preparing a records schedule for the office.

To address the issue of records retention, the CHRAB urges local governments to adopt and follow approved retention schedules. Taking this action will help these governments manage the accumulation of obsolete or non-current records in offices and storage areas. Although legal requirements outline actions that must be taken before records are disposed of, they do not require that local governments dispose of obsolete records. Field contacts with some county clerks revealed that they are retaining large quantities of useless records “just in case.”

Local governments must use their own initiative and contact the Archives to clarify legal disposition requirements, and then implement the records disposition schedule. As to what the CHRAB can do to address this concern, the Board might sponsor workshops or provide educational materials to help local governments understand and discuss retention and disposition issues.

Priority #2: Preservation of Historical Records

The need for retention schedules emphasizes the second priority concern: preservation of local government historical records. To reiterate, the retention of obsolete records crowds storage rooms and makes it difficult for records clerks to appraise and preserve records of enduring value to their governments. All of the respondents reported that they have records that pre-date the 1900s. The records include paper, film, and magnetic media

and, all present their own preservation challenges. Paper can become brittle, film unreadable, and magnetic tape lost to erasure. When an office chooses to retain obsolete or non-current records, it becomes harder to segregate important records for archival preservation from a plethora of otherwise valueless materials.

For the most part, archivists consider only a small portion of a local government's records to have archival value. These are the types of records that document the origin, organization, development, policies, and procedures of the government. They provide a continuous link between the present and the past. In short, they provide evidence of its existence and function. Such records are archival in nature and designated as "Permanent" on records retention schedules.

An important aspect in the preservation of archival records is whether the materials are stored in a proper environment. Poor storage exacerbates preservation problems. Question twelve asked respondents, "Are your permanent records stored in an area (or areas) equipped with . . ." (a list of controls followed). Sixty (39%) municipal clerks, eight (22%) clerk and recorders, seven (23%) county court clerks, and eight (28%) of the municipal court clerks reported that the storage area did not have any type of environmental, fire, or security controls. While fire and theft are universally known (among the survey respondents) to have adverse effects on the preservation of documents, the negative effects of humidity and temperature do not appear to cause particular concern to many of the reporting governments. Some have temperature-controlled storage, but not humidity controls. Although Colorado's temperate climate allows for certain flexibility in environmental controls, a constant environment will enable better preservation of historical records.

Again, this is an area for local action. Local governments can either organize their own archival program, work cooperatively with a number of other local governments (this is usually an option for smaller governments), or (as a last resort) arrange for the county historical society to store the government's archival records. Of course, records officers should carefully explore each option to ensure that the resulting program meets the needs of the local government and its community. The CHRAB might make available guidelines to assist local governments in the organization of archival programs. These guidelines would outline the specific elements that should be present in order to develop a successful archival program.

Priority #3: Development of a Disaster Plan

As one examines the survey results, it is easy to see why this is high on the list of priorities for county and municipal records officers. Only eight (22%) clerk and recorders, ten (33%) of the county court clerks, and twenty-two (12%) of the municipal clerks/court clerks (that responded) have security systems in place for their permanent records. Fire suppression systems are also scarce. Eleven (31%) of the clerk and recorders, five (17%) of the county court clerks, and twenty-five (14%) of the municipal clerks/court clerks have suppression systems (sprinklers, Halon, foam) in place to douse flames if a fire occurs.

Fire protection through detection systems is more widely used. Nineteen (53%) of the clerk and recorders, twelve (40%) of the county court clerks, and fifty-one (28%) of the municipal clerks/court clerks have fire detection systems installed in the storage areas where permanent records are kept. It is fortunate that only two of the county clerk and recorders and four of the municipal clerks reported a records loss due to disasters last year. However, no institution is immune from a natural or man-made disaster. Records officers should always prepare for this eventuality.

The CHRAB's survey only asked about the most recent year of activity. However, any loss of records due to leaky pipes, abandoned wells, overflowing rivers, vandalism, or fires is serious. Such a loss is indicative of inadequate storage conditions and weaknesses in the records program. It is important that records officers know where the threats for disaster lie inside and outside their facilities.

The CHRAB recommends that all records officers develop a disaster plan for their office and records center. This plan should include the vital records of the local government. Vital records are those records that are essential for the continuation, or resumption, of operations following a natural or man-made disaster. Examples of vital records are minutes, deed books, original maps, current fiscal accounts, personnel records, and insurance policies. Records officers should contact the commercial records center where they store office records and ask questions about its disaster preparedness including preservation and conservation efforts (like pest management) and its level of insurance and risk management.

State records officers should consult the State Archives for assistance with the preparation of a comprehensive disaster plan. Other resources are the Library of Congress Conservation Center, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Colorado Preservation Alliance. These organizations can provide records officers with a list of businesses and persons involved with conservation and disaster response.

Priority #4: Management of Computer Records

In keeping with the rapid technological development of information systems, most local governments are turning to electronic devices to store some of their public records. There are still some governments, however, (primarily the smaller ones) that have not been automated. For instance, all the clerk and recorders (who responded) reported using some type of automated system in their office. However, 7% of the municipal court clerks and county court clerks (who responded) stated they had no automated system in use, and 24 % of the municipal clerks reported the same.

While the CHRAB believes that technology is not a panacea for records management challenges, it is only a matter of time before all governments incorporate electronic information technology into their operations. All around the country government agencies are already creating, maintaining, and disposing of records in digital format. As more governments use electronic record keeping systems, the proper management of these systems, so that evidence of the public record is complete and accurate, becomes crucial. Colorado's statutory definition of a public record includes "digitally stored data " along with the more traditional media. However, the state provides very little guidance on the management of electronic records beyond mandating that they, like paper records, be open to the public.

Fourteen of the twenty-six municipal court clerks answered "No" to the question, "Has your dept/office provided for the management of computer-generated records?" Fifty-eight out of 107 of the municipal clerk respondents also answered "No" to this question. Field contacts revealed that some clerks, as a precaution, are reproducing hard copies of every file created on the computer. This action is acceptable because it helps to maintain the record until this group of records officers is ready to tackle the challenges that automation imposes on the records management profession. To their credit, almost all the respondents are creating back-ups and storing security copies either in the office or off-site.

The survey did not question whether the records officers are applying conventional record keeping practices to their electronic records. Other questions to consider are:

- Are the records disposed of according to the requirements of an existing schedule?
- Is the State Archives consulted before disposal of electronic records?
- Do records officers collect and maintain information about the software and hardware used in creating electronic records, so that documents are migrated when equipment is upgraded?
- Are records officers storing the magnetic media in an appropriate environment?

The CHRAB plans to address the issue of electronic records management further, particularly as it relates to the preservation of historical records. However, Board members realize that they too must first increase their understanding of electronic information technology, and of the new issues that it brings to the archives and records management professions. Only then can the Board propose specific recommendations to public records custodians for appropriate records management practices. Educational workshops, seminars, focus group discussions, and ultimately published guidelines concerning best electronic record keeping practices are just some of the actions the CHRAB might take.

Priority #5: Records Storage Space

With the exception of municipal clerks, all subgroup respondents saw an increase in the volume of records in the office over the past year. To accommodate the increases some of the counties and municipalities are building record centers, some are renting additional office space, and some are constructing new office buildings with enhanced records storage capacities. Most local governments are choosing to meet this increase by either microfilming or imaging (scanning) their records. While 73 % of the county court clerks reported that they are microfilming their records, 72% of the clerk and recorders reported they are planning to use optical imaging technology. Similarly, a large percentage of municipal clerks and court clerks plan to image their records.

Action to address storage space concerns rest with local government managers who must take steps to either upgrade or enhance records storage areas. Records officers need to take the initiative and educate their managers about the importance of proper storage and environmental controls to the preservation of records. The CHRAB and the State Archives may provide support to these agencies in such instances.

Priority #6: Professional Information and Staff Training

Local government records officers ranked professional information and staff training sixth on their list of high priorities. This need achieved a moderate to low ranking from the four subgroups of local governments surveyed. Such a response is acceptable for a topic as nebulous as "information and training." In order for record custodians to clearly distinguish information and training as a record program need all other tangible concerns (like limited storage, molding or crumbling papers, flooded storerooms, unusable diskettes, etc.) must be addressed. Nevertheless, professional knowledge relates directly to issues of storage, preservation, retention scheduling, and electronic record keeping.

An analysis of where records officers obtain assistance on archival or records management matters might prove useful in determining what kinds of training and educational programs would benefit Colorado's public records custodians the most. An

overwhelming majority of each subgroup turns to the state for advice concerning records program matters. However, it appears that they do not necessarily seek this advice from the State Archives. Only the county clerk and recorders (78% of those reporting) maintain regular contact with the State Archives. All records officers are turning to their colleagues for assistance. They also obtain support from professional organizations or publications. Local chapters of the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA) and the Colorado Municipal League (CML) are the two professional organizations that records clerks most commonly turn to for records management advice. Memberships in organizations are important because the newsletters and journals that such groups publish bring information directly to the records staff, thus reducing the need to travel to workshops or conferences.

Hands-on training gives undisputed benefits to the records officer. Most respondents called for regional workshops or on-site consultations. Question and answer sessions are excellent forums for addressing issues of mutual concern to records officers. Records officers may consider acting in cooperation with each other and requesting regional workshops on records management. The CHRAB and the State Archives will work with the local records management organizations in order to maximize their outreach efforts in the public records community.

State Government

CHRAB administered the same survey to all state departments and colleges and universities. Fifteen Colorado state agencies responded to the survey and returned fifty-eight questionnaires. Twelve of the thirty universities and colleges under the Department of Higher Education participated in the survey. The following is a combined ranking of their priorities, again based on the percentage of respondents selecting the needs as a High priority.

| | | |
|-------------|---|-------|
| Priority #1 | Records Storage Space | (43%) |
| Priority #2 | Management of Computer Records | (42%) |
| Priority #3 | Development of Disaster Plan | (35%) |
| Priority #4 | Professional Information & Staff Training | (33%) |
| Priority #5 | Preservation of Historical Records | (30%) |
| Priority #6 | Records Retention Scheduling | (28%) |

• Table 3

| Ranked Priority | Number of Respective Responses Per Need | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | Disaster Planning | Computer Records | Preservation | Prof. Info & Training | Retention Scheduling | Storage Space |
| High | 17 of 48 | 19 of 45 | 13 of 43 | 13 of 40 | 13 of 47 | 21 of 49 |
| Medium | 13 of 48 | 18 of 45 | 16 of 43 | 13 of 40 | 16 of 47 | 19 of 49 |
| Low | 18 of 48 | 8 of 45 | 14 of 43 | 14 of 40 | 18 of 47 | 9 of 49 |

Priority #1 Records Storage Space

With the State Archives at 90% capacity, it is not surprising that state agencies consider storage their number one priority. The Archives stores both temporary records and permanent records in its records center facility, and has a total storage capacity of 80,000 cubic feet. In addition to its Denver facility, the State Archives has an unmanned records center in Simla, Colorado where it stores records with low retrieval or reference rates. This facility is at approximately 80% of its capacity. At this time the State has no plans to build or upgrade these facilities.

Thirty-two (55%) of the respondents store their records with the State Archives and thirteen (22%) maintain in-house record centers. Others are renting storage space, using department warehouses, or contracting with commercial records centers. As their records increase in volume a number of agencies are considering other storage options. Thirty-seven percent of those responding are considering optical imaging, and another 19% are planning to microfilm their records.

The college and university respondents also face storage capacity challenges and registrars are responding in a similar of ways. Eight (67%) of the respondents store their records in an in-house records center, two (17%) use government-operated records centers, and two (17%) use a nearby storage room or vault. In the past year, eight (67%) of these respondents saw an increase in the volume of records. To handle the increase they are planning to scan records and possibly using CD-ROMs as their storage media.

Storage conditions for permanent records in state agencies, colleges, and universities. Since most of the respondents indicated that their permanent records were at the State Archives, it is difficult to draw conclusions for this area. The difficulty exists because the CHRAB does not know whether the responses to question twelve (environmental controls and security systems) relate to State Archives facilities or to an in-house or commercial records center. Storage conditions in the Archives are the same for both archival (permanent) records and temporary records. The facility has temperature and humidity controls, as well as fire detection and suppression systems.

Seven (58%) of the colleges and universities that responded have temperature controls, but only one has humidity controls (8%). Five (42%) have fire detection and suppression systems. Only two (16%) of the respondents have no temperature/humidity controls or fire detection/suppression systems.

Priority #2 Management of Computer Records

In general, electronic information technology is more prevalent in Colorado's state agencies than in its counties or municipalities. State agencies appear to be upgrading their systems as soon as feasibly possible. Only three (5%) respondents were without any type of automated system in their offices, and forty-six (76%) have a local network. Most of the respondents purchased their computer systems in the 1990s. In the years between 1990 -1994, twenty-one (36%) of the agencies installed new systems, while seventeen (29%) installed new systems in 1996. At the time of the survey, only three (5%) of the respondents had systems that pre-dated 1984.

Although, questions pertaining to the management of computer records yielded positive responses, it is impossible to know to what extent state agencies are managing electronic information systems that contain state records. Forty-eight (83%) have someone who is responsible for the system, and thirty-five (63%) feel confident about the way their office

manages computer-generated records. However, only twenty-eight (48%) said that storage for their electronic records were satisfactory.

State colleges and universities. All twelve of the respondents have automated systems in their offices. Three of the respondents have systems that pre-date 1984, and only one (8%) installed new systems as recent as 1996. College and university registrars (that responded) also seem to feel confident about the management of their computer-generated records. Six (50%) are storing security copies off-site, but four (33%) are unsure about the status of security copies.

With the technology changing so rapidly it is inevitable that some records will be lost, but management controls are necessary if state records, regardless of media, are to be properly managed and preserved. Furthermore, as the format of information continues to change, state records/information officers will need to uniformly address electronic records. Records/information officers will also need to consider the magnetic media on which state records are stored, and the office automation applications (electronic mail, word processing documents, databases, and spreadsheets) that agency staffs use to create these records. The staff at the State Archives realizes they face a critical challenge. They must try to make state employees that maintain electronic records aware that the preservation and/or disposition of electronic records is as important and the preservation and/or disposition of paper records.

Colleges and universities bear the same responsibilities for their electronic records. Academic institutions rely heavily on information systems. Registrars keep student records on large databases indefinitely. Preparing migration plans is crucial to ensure that no records are lost when the information systems professionals install a new system.

Sound record keeping practices should persist regardless of the media or form of the record. To assist state agencies, the CHRAB might sponsor seminars, group discussions, and workshops. However, it is first up to the institutions to acknowledge the shift in the way they are capturing information and then attempt to gain intellectual and physical control over the digital material.

Priority #3: Disaster Planning

It is rare that an archivist or records manager will go through his or her entire career without experiencing an archives or records center disaster. Those that do not prepare for such an eventuality would be grossly negligent in their duties as records officers. Having a comprehensive disaster plan can make the difference between a minor or major loss of the office's records and books.

There are three components to disaster preparedness planning: 1) taking disaster prevention measures, 2) establishing disaster prevention policies and, 3) establishing the plan itself. The CHRAB's 1997 survey only explored the disaster prevention efforts of respondents. Of the fifty-eight state agency respondents, twenty-two (38%) have their permanent records stored in an area that has a security system in place. Six (50%) of the colleges/university respondents also have security systems for their permanent records. To provide protection from fire, thirty-two (55%) of the state agencies and five (42%) of the colleges/universities (that responded) have fire detection systems (smoke/heat alarms). Also, thirty-three (57%) of the state agencies and five (42%) of the colleges/universities have fire suppression systems (sprinklers, Halon, foam).

A fair number of the respondents have some type of climate control in place. Twenty-five (43%) of the state agencies and six (50%) of the colleges/universities have temperature controls. Only a few, however, (twelve state agencies and zero colleges/universities) have humidity controls. Unfortunately, the survey contained no questions about water protection measures, or about the respondents' efforts to minimize damage and maximize recovery. Half of the colleges/university respondents (ten) and nearly one third of the state agencies (twelve) seem to consider disaster preparedness a high priority for their records program.

The CHRAB recommends that all records officers develop a disaster plan for their office and records center, being sure to the *vital records* of the agency in this plan. Records officers should contact the commercial records center where they store office records and ask questions about its disaster preparedness including preservation and conservation efforts (like pest management) and its level of insurance and risk management.

State records officers should consult the State Archives for assistance with the preparation of a comprehensive disaster plan. Other resources are the Library of Congress Conservation Center, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Colorado Preservation Alliance. These organizations can provide records officers with a list of businesses and persons involved with conservation and disaster response.

Priority #4: Professional Information & Staff Training

That this need is fourth on the state agencies' list of high priorities might demonstrate an awareness of how crucial professional knowledge and training is in a field that is froth with technological changes and preservation challenges. Records officers know that they cannot perform a task satisfactorily if they do not know how to do it. Fifty-five (95%) of the state agency respondents obtain professional assistance from a state agency, and twenty-nine (50%) maintain regular contact with the State Archives. College and university respondents obtain professional advice from a state agency and three (25%) maintain regular contact with the State Archives. Archivists and records officers need practical training in new technologies and the preservation requirements of all media (paper, film, magnetic). This training can come by way of a local or national group. It is important that information professionals keep abreast of changes in their respective professions. The CHRAB encourages state records officers to contact the State Archives for information and training on establishing records management policies and procedures, files maintenance, records inventorying, and records retention programming.

Other sources of assistance are professional organizations. Only five (9%) of the state agency respondents look to professional organizations for advice. However, organizations like the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA), the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA), the Society of American Archivists (SAA), the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists (SRMA), and the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) can be a tremendous source of assistance in obtaining staff training and professional development.

Publications can also be a source of professional assistance. The National Archives and Records Administration publishes handbooks on records management and archival techniques. Professional organizations like SAA publish technical manuals on basic archives and records management practices. To assist, the CHRAB might sponsor educational workshops, discussion groups, or seminars in the fundamentals of records and information management.

Priority #5: Preservation of Historical Records

Government records are valuable, first, as evidential records of government activities; and second, as historical records created by government. Records officers should preserve the historical records of their government. The Colorado State archives and the Colorado Historical Society collects, maintains and preserves historical records of the state. It is not unusual, however, for some agencies to maintain physical as well as intellectual custody of their permanently valuable records. It appears that state agencies, combined, have an equivalent 16,552 linear feet of permanent records. These agencies also maintain an additional 84,887 of these records in microform (in either roll format or fiche). Colleges and university respondents hold an equivalent 4,678 equivalent linear feet of permanent records, with an additional 4,775 in microform.

In terms of preserving permanently valuable records, twenty-nine (50%) of the state agency respondents reported that their departments support microfilming or scanning activities for these records. Ten of the college and university respondents also support the microfilming or scanning of permanent records.

Microfilming is an excellent form of preservation for records with historical value, not to mention its space-saving advantages. However, processors must properly develop microfilm if the resulting images are to remain readable over time. Experts estimate the life expectancy of archive quality (silver halide) microfilm to be a little more than one hundred years, CD-ROMs at fifty years and magnetic tapes (reel-to-reel, cartridges, and video) at a little more than ten years. A constant environment is essential in order for the media to fulfill these expectations.

Records management and archival professionals do not consider imaging a sound preservation solution because of the problems with technical obsolescence. A records officer will need to migrate archival records to another medium for permanent retention. The CHRAB encourages agencies to engage in preservation planning before initiating any imaging activity. Ask the department's information technicians pointed questions concerning the imaging system itself, and ways that they can integrate existing records with the new system and media for optimum results. State agencies should consult the State Archives for guidance on archival standards of microfilm and other preservation-related services.

Priority #6: Records Retention Scheduling

That this need is sixth on the state agencies' list of high priorities may be attributed to the fact that the State Archives routinely disseminates the *General Records Management Manual* to all state agencies. The manual contains retention schedules for most state government records and provides retention periods for not only the original or record copies of documents, but also the reproduction (duplicate) copies as well. In addition, it has suggested guidelines for optical diskettes and electronic mail.

Records are accumulating in government offices at a rapid pace. Thirty-one (53%) of the state agencies and eight (67%) of the colleges and universities experienced an increase in the volume of records in 1996. The State Archives stores permanently valuable records at no cost to state agencies. Records with temporary value, however, are stored for a fee. Eighty thousand cubic feet of records are stored at the State Archives, three thousand of which are temporary records. State agencies, colleges, and universities are storing an equivalent 51, 008 linear feet of temporary records (in boxes, in drawers, or on shelves). The state government contracts storage of temporary records to private vendors.

To handle increases seventeen (29%) of the state agency respondents are planning to image their records and fifteen (26%) are planning to microfilm. Nine (75%) of the college and university respondents are looking at optical imaging and four (33%) at microfilming.

A records management program is good if it consists of a well-managed records retention schedule. State agencies should contact the State Archives for a copy of the *Revised General Records Management Manual*. Once the manual is in hand, it is up to the agencies to systematically destroy their records in accordance with the records retention schedules. If the Manual does not cover all major records of the agency, conduct a records inventory of all divisions with an eye towards compiling a detailed list of the records series maintained by the agency. If needed, contact the State Archives for help with this task, and the subsequent assignment of a retention period for those records series not covered by the Manual. Additionally, RLOs should periodically review their records retention program and keep it up-to-date. To assist, the CHRAB might provide educational workshops on records retention programming.

Conclusion

Although the survey gathered a great deal of data, many questions went unasked. Analysis revealed further investigation is needed, particularly in the areas of disaster planning and electronic records keeping. The survey successfully outlined areas for improvement in the management of local and state records. Colorado's records managers need more training and continued professional development. Furthermore, they need to communicate more with the State Archives and those professional organizations with the resources to assist them. No one group has all the answers, therefore institutions must work together to overcome the common problems confronting them.

The records management profession is changing and Colorado's records officers and archivists cannot afford to lag behind. As electronic records continue to evolve, local and state governments must prepare themselves to respond to issues of management and program development. It is important that records officers have training and continued educational opportunities in order to administer successful records programs. Records officers need to set goals, show initiative, and seek out additional resources.

Local and State Government Records Program Assessment

APPENDIX A: 1997 Survey of State/County/Municipal Records

**Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board
1997 Survey of State/County/Municipal Historical Records**

Records Management

Records management programs exist for the systematic filing and retrieval of public records currently in use and for the orderly disposition of non-current public records. While most records created by government agencies are of temporary value and should be retained temporarily, others, such as court minutes, land records, minutes of governing bodies, etc., must be permanently preserved for their continuing administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical value. Permanent records are defined as archives, and function as the collective memory of a state, county, or municipality.

SECTION ONE: AGENCY INFORMATION

Agency Name: _____

Street address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Mailing address: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____

E-mail: _____ Web site: _____

Records manager/administrator's name: _____

Type of local government?

1 Municipality

2 County

3 Court

4 State

SECTION TWO: MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS

HOLDINGS

(1) Which of the following governs the management of records in your local government/department?

1 Local ordinances

2 Policy/procedural manual

3 Administrative directives

4 State statute

5 No policy

(2) Does your agency use an official record retention schedule to determine how long to keep its records?

1 Yes

2 No

(3) Has your agency identified those records that it considers of permanent historical value?

1 Yes

2 No

(4) What is the approximate volume of your **permanent** records? (**ESTIMATE** total numbers of material.)

| Type of Storage | Estimated Number of Units |
|---|---------------------------|
| Filing cabinet and/or map case drawers <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | _____ drawers |
| Record center boxes (i.e., an "apple box") <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | _____ boxes |
| Microfilm and/or fiche <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | _____ rolls/fiche |
| Computer media (disks, CDs) <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | _____ disks/CDs |

(5) What is the approximate volume of your **temporary** records? (**ESTIMATE** total numbers of material.)

| Type of Storage | Estimated Number of Units |
|---|---------------------------|
| Filing cabinet and/or map case drawers <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | _____ drawers |
| Record center boxes (i.e., an "apple box") <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | _____ boxes |
| Microfilm and/or fiche <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | _____ rolls/fiche |
| Computer media (disks, CDs) <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | _____ disks/CDs |

(6) Which dates do your records encompass?

- 1 Pre-1858
 2 1858-1876
 3 1876-1900

- 4 1900-1930
 5 1930-1945
 6 1945-present

(7) Do researchers have access to your office's records?

- 1 Yes 2 No

(8) Does your agency provide a central point for the public to access records?

- 1 Yes 2 No

RECORDS STORAGE

(9) In addition to the office, where does your agency store its records? (Check all that apply)

- 1 Commercial records center 4 Warehouse
 2 In-house records center 5 Other (specify) _____
 3 Government-operated records center _____

(10) During the last year, has the volume of records held by your agency (Check one)

- 1 Decreased 2 Remained stable 3 Increased

(11) If records' volume is increasing, are there plans to accommodate that increase with any of the following? (Check all that apply)

- 1 Rent additional office space 4 Microfilm
 2 Build a records center 5 Other _____
 3 Optical imaging _____

(12) Are your **permanent** records stored in an area equipped with: (check all that apply)

- 1 Year-round temperature controls 5 Security systems
 2 Year-round humidity controls 6 None
 3 Fire detection (smoke/heat alarms) 7 Other (specify) _____
 4 Fire suppression (sprinklers, Halon) _____

(13) Has your agency experienced any records loss due to disasters during the past year?

- 1 Yes 2 No

BUDGET

(14) During the past year, has the funding for your agency's operating expenses: (Check one)

- 1 Decreased 2 Remained stable 3 Increased

(15) Over the next year, do you expect funding or income for your agency's operating expenses to: (Check one):

- 1 Decrease 2 Remain stable 3 Increase

(16) What is your agency's funding sources?

- 1 Local appropriations
- 2 State funds
- 3 Grants

- 4 Fees (Earned income from fee, sales, etc.)
- 5 Other (specify) _____

(17) Does your municipality/county/court/department support any of the following?

- A. A full or part-time position of Records Manager or Archivist? 1 Yes 2 No
- B. Microfilming or scanning permanently valuable records? 1 Yes 2 No
- C. Carrying out conservation work on older historical records that may need repair? 1 Yes 2 No

SECTION THREE: ELECTRONIC RECORDS

(18) What types of automated systems are used in your agency? (Check all that apply):

- 1 Mainframe computer
- 2 Local network
- 3 Stand-alone computers
- 4 Computer assisted retrieval (CAR)
- 5 Optical disk system
- 6 None (Skip to Section 4)
- 7 Do not know
- 8 Other (specify) _____

(19) Is there a person responsible for the system?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not know

(20) Has your office made provisions for the management of computer-generated records?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not know

(21) Are computer files regularly backed-up and are security copies stored at an off-site location?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not know

SECTION FOUR: NEEDS & SERVICES

(22) Where do you presently obtain advice about records management and archival matters? (Check all that apply):

- 1 Professional organization
- 2 Publications
- 3 Colleagues in other counties/cities
- 4 State agency
- 5 Paid consultants
- 6 Other (specify) _____

(23) Please prioritize your agency's greatest records needs. (Use the following ratings: 1 = High priority, 2 = Medium priority, 3 = Low priority.)

- _____ 1 Development of disaster plan
- _____ 2 Management of computer records
- _____ 3 Preservation of historical records
- _____ 4 Professional information & staff training
- _____ 5 Records retention scheduling
- _____ 6 Records storage space
- _____ 7 Other (specify and rate) _____

(24) Do you have regular contact with the Colorado State Archives?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

(25) Would you be interested in receiving professional on-site consultation with a CHRAB representative?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Please Note Any Additional Comments or Concerns

Local and State Government Records Program Assessment

APPENDIX B: 1997 Survey Results

Collection and Interpretation of Statistics

The data in the following tables were collected during the 1997 Survey of State/County/Municipal Records conducted by the Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board (CHRAB) in November.

The numbers in the tables are not absolute. All results are tentative. The CHRAB recognizes that not every official records custodian may have received a questionnaire, and some that did declined to participate. The various tables and comparisons will be used merely as a benchmark for development of board priorities. The Board presents the results, not as definitive conclusions, but as an overall impression of conditions.

Table 1: Which of the following governs the management of records in your government/dept./office? (Check all that apply)

| Program Policy | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks & Court Clerks | College/Universities | State Agencies |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Local ordinances | 5 (14%) | 0 | 86 (48%) | 0 | 2 (3%) |
| Policy/procedural manual | 11 (31%) | 19 (63%) | 75 (41%) | 8 (67%) | 36 (62%) |
| Administrative directives | 10 (28%) | 18 (60%) | 64 (35%) | 7 (58%) | 40 (69%) |
| State statute | 34 (94%) | 29 (97%) | 133 (73%) | 12 (100%) | 50 (86%) |
| No policy | 1 (3%) | 0 | 14 (8%) | 0 | 1 (2%) |
| No Responses | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

Table 2: Does your dept./office use an official records retention schedule to determine how long to keep its records?

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Responses | Totals |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 30 (86%) | 5 (14%) | 1 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 28 (93%) | 2 (7%) | 0 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 111 (61%) | 68 (38%) | 2 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 11 (92%) | 1 (8%) | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 49 (84%) | 9 (16%) | 0 | 58 |

Table 3: Has your dept./office identified those records that it considers of permanent value?

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Responses | Totals |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 31 (86%) | 4 (11%) | 1 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 28 (93%) | 2 (7%) | 0 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 128 (71%) | 48 (27%) | 5 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 12 (100%) | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 48 (83%) | 10 (17%) | 0 | 58 |

Table 4: What is the approximate volume of your permanent records? (Estimate total numbers of units.)

| Respondents | Equivalent Linear Feet | Microfilm/fiche | Case files/Books | No Responses |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 4,158 | 743,693 | 3,252 | 9 |
| County Court Clerks | 32,875 | 4,205 | 1,074,500 | 6 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 21,861 | 1,440 | 5,632 | 20 |
| Colleges/Universities | 4,678 | 4,775 | 0 | 1 |
| State Agencies | 16,552 | 84,887 | 447,107 | 9 |

Table 5: What is the approximate volume of your **temporary** records? (Estimate total numbers of units.)

| Respondents | Equivalent Linear Feet | Microfilm/fiche | Case files/Books | No Responses |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 4,016 | 366 | 18 | 21 |
| County Court Clerks | 9,625 | 180 | 63,900 | 12 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 19,350 | 100 | 1,040 | 40 |
| Colleges/Universities | 1,628 | 9 | 2000 | 4 |
| State Agencies | 49,380 | 3,242 | 8,076 | 14 |

Table 6: Which dates do your permanent records encompass? (Check all that apply)

| Year Spans | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Pre-1858 | 4 (11%) | 6 (20%) | 5 (3%) | 0 | 1 (1%) |
| 1858-1876 | 14 (39%) | 9 (30%) | 11 (6%) | 2 (17%) | 6 (10%) |
| 1876-1900 | 25 (69%) | 15 (50%) | 56 (31%) | 3 (25%) | 11 (19%) |
| 1900-1930 | 23 (64%) | 20 (67%) | 106 (59%) | 5 (42%) | 21 (36%) |
| 1930-1945 | 22 (61%) | 20 (67%) | 105 (58%) | 7 (58%) | 24 (41%) |
| 1945-1960 | 22 (61%) | 22 (73%) | 113 (62%) | 7 (58%) | 28 (48%) |
| 1960-1975 | 22 (61%) | 26 (87%) | 117 (65%) | 11 (92%) | 33 (57%) |
| 1975-present | 23 (64%) | 27 (90%) | 144 (80%) | 12 (100%) | 52 (90%) |
| No Responses | 1 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 4 |

Table 7: Does your dept./office provide a designated research area for the public to access records?

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Responses | Totals |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|--------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 31 (86%) | 4 (11%) | 1 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 7 (23%) | 22 (73%) | 1 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 38 (21%) | 136 (75%) | 6 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 2 (17%) | 10 (83%) | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 24 (41%) | 34 (59%) | 0 | 58 |

Table 8: Do your records have legal or administrative restrictions on access?

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Responses | Totals |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 18 (50%) | 16 (44%) | 2 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 28 (93%) | 2 (7%) | 0 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 105 (58%) | 63 (35%) | 13 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 11 (92%) | 1 (8%) | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 42 (72%) | 16 (28%) | 0 | 58 |

Table 9: In addition to the office, where does your dept./office store its records? (Check all that apply)

| Storage Area | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Commercial records center | 4 (11%) | 1 (3%) | 3 (2%) | 0 | 7 (12%) |
| In-house records center | 14 (39%) | 7 (23%) | 65 (36%) | 8 (67%) | 13 (22%) |
| Government-operated records center | 16 (44%) | 13 (43%) | 9 (5%) | 2 (17%) | 32 (55%) |
| Warehouse | 2 (6%) | 2 (7%) | 32 (18%) | 1 (8%) | 11 (19%) |
| Other | 13 (36%) | 10 (33%) | 58 (32%) | 4 (33%) | 8 (14%) |
| No Responses | 3 | 5 | 34 | 0 | 5 |

Table 10: During the last year, has the volume of records held by your dept./office (check one)

| Volume of Records | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Decreased | 0 | 2 (7%) | 12 (7%) | 1 (8%) | 2 (3%) |
| Remained Stable | 7 (19%) | 2 (7%) | 71 (39%) | 3 (25%) | 25 (43%) |
| Increased | 28 (78%) | 26 (87%) | 91 (50%) | 8 (67%) | 31 (53%) |
| No Responses | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 |

Table 11: If records' volume is increasing, are there plans to accommodate that increase with any of the following? (Check all that apply)

| Records Program Plans | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Rent additional office space | 0 | 1 (3%) | 5 (3%) | 0 | 3 (5%) |
| Build records center | 2 (69%) | 1 (3%) | 9 (5%) | 0 | 1 (2%) |
| Optical imaging | 26 (72%) | 1 (3%) | 25 (14%) | 9 (75%) | 17 (29%) |
| Microfilm | 6 (17%) | 22 (73%) | 21 (12%) | 4 (33%) | 15 (26%) |
| Other | 4 (11%) | 8 (27%) | 33 (18%) | 2 (17%) | 11 (19%) |
| No Plans | 1 | 0 | 13 (7%) | 0 | 6 (10%) |
| No Responses | 5 | 5 | 85 | 1 | 20 |

Table 12: Are your permanent records stored in an area (or areas) equipped with: (check all that apply)

| Equipment | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Year-round temp. controls | 7 (19%) | 10 (33%) | 38 (21%) | 6 (50%) | 25 (43%) |
| Year-round humidity controls | 5 (14%) | 3 (10%) | 10 (6%) | 0 | 12 (21%) |
| Fire detection | 19 (53%) | 12 (40%) | 51 (28%) | 5 (42%) | 32 (55%) |
| Fire suppression | 11 (31%) | 5 (17%) | 25 (14%) | 5 (42%) | 33 (57%) |
| Security systems | 8 (22%) | 10 (33%) | 22 (12%) | 6 (50%) | 22 (38%) |
| None | 8 (22%) | 7 (23%) | 68 (38%) | 2 (17%) | 5 (9%) |
| Other | 5 (14%) | 7 (23%) | 29 (16%) | 1 (8%) | 9 (16%) |
| No Responses | 2 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 6 |

Table 13: Has your dept./office experienced any record loss due to disasters during the past year?

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|--------|-----------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 2 (6%) | 32 (89%) | 2 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 0 | 30 (100%) | 0 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 7 (4%) | 171 (94%) | 6 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 1 (8%) | 11 (92%) | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 2 (3%) | 54 (93%) | 2 | 58 |

Table 14: During the past year, has the funding for your dept./office's operating expenses: (check one)

| Funding | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Decreased | 5 (14%) | 3 (10%) | 12 (7%) | 3 (25%) | 9 (16%) |
| Remained Stable | 22 (61%) | 21 (70%) | 119 (66%) | 7 (58%) | 38 (66%) |
| Increased | 8 (22%) | 5 (17%) | 39 (22%) | 2 (17%) | 8 (14%) |
| No Responses | 1 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 3 |

Table 15: Over the next year, do you expect funding or income for your dept./office's operating expenses to: (check one)

| Funding | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Decreased | 4 (11%) | 1 (3%) | 12 (7%) | 2 (17%) | 6 (10%) |
| Remained Stable | 23 (64%) | 24 (80%) | 125 (69%) | 8 (67%) | 43 (74%) |
| Increased | 8 (22%) | 2 (7%) | 33 (18%) | 2 (17%) | 6 (10%) |
| No Responses | 1 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 3 |

Table 16: What is/are your dept./office's funding source(s)? (Check all that apply)

| Funding Sources | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Local appropriations | 24 (67%) | 1 (3%) | 142 (78%) | 1 (8%) | 1 (2%) |
| State funds | 6 (17%) | 29 (97%) | 45 (25%) | 12 (100%) | 38 (66%) |
| Grants | 0 | 2 (7%) | 24 (13%) | 1 (8%) | 12 (21%) |
| Fees | 12 (33%) | 0 | 58 (32%) | 3 (25%) | 27 (47%) |
| Other | 8 (22%) | 0 | 16 (9%) | 0 | 15 (26%) |
| No Responses | 0 | 1 | 13 | 0 | 0 |

Table 17: Does your municipality/county/department support any of the following?

A. A full or part-time position of Records Manager or Archivist.

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 14 (39%) | 13 (36%) | 9 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 4 (13%) | 22 (73%) | 4 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 21 (12%) | 150 (83%) | 10 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 6 (50%) | 5 (42%) | 1 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 19 (33%) | 35 (60%) | 4 | 58 |

B. Microfilming or scanning permanently valuable records.

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 33 (92%) | 1 (3%) | 2 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 11 (37%) | 14 (47%) | 5 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 32 (18%) | 137 (76%) | 12 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 10 (83%) | 2 (17%) | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 29 (50%) | 24 (41%) | 5 | 58 |

C. Carrying out conservation work on older historical records that may need repair.

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 17 (47%) | 13 (36%) | 6 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 1 (3%) | 23 (79%) | 6 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 13 (7%) | 149 (82%) | 19 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 2 (17%) | 9 (75%) | 1 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 5 (9%) | 43 (74%) | 10 | 58 |

Table 18: What types of automated systems are used in your dept./office? (Check all that apply)

| Automated Systems | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Mainframe computer | 7 (19%) | 16 (53%) | 35 (19%) | 10 (83%) | 19 (33%) |
| Local network | 12 (33%) | 2 (7%) | 57 (31%) | 9 (75%) | 46 (79%) |
| Stand-alone computers | 12 (33%) | 7 (23%) | 83 (46%) | 6 (50%) | 27 (47%) |
| Computer assisted retrieval (CAR) | 8 (22%) | 1 (3%) | 2 (1%) | 3 (25%) | 8 (14%) |
| Optical disk system | 18 (50%) | 0 | 13 (7%) | 4 (33%) | 2 (3%) |
| None | 0 | 2 (7%) | 38 (21%) | 0 | 3 (5%) |
| Do not know | 2 (6%) | 1 (3%) | 1 (1%) | 0 | 1 (2%) |
| Other | 7 (19%) | 6 (20%) | 1 (1%) | 0 | 2 (3%) |
| No Responses | 1 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 3 |

Table 19: How old is/are the system(s)?

| Year | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Pre-1984 | 3 (8%) | 2 (7%) | 2 (1%) | 3 (25%) | 3 (5%) |
| 1984-1990 | 5 (14%) | 2 (7%) | 14 (8%) | 3 (25%) | 8 (14%) |
| 1990-1994 | 10 (28%) | 6 (20%) | 50 (28%) | 2 (17%) | 21 (36%) |
| 1995 | 2 (6%) | 11 (37%) | 41 (23%) | 1 (8%) | 13 (22%) |
| 1996 | 14 (39%) | 8 (27%) | 34 (19%) | 2 (17%) | 14 (24%) |
| 1997 | 12 (33%) | 8 (27%) | 29 (16%) | 1 (8%) | 17 (29%) |
| No Responses | 1 | 4 | 43 | 1 | 11 |

Table 20: Is there a person responsible for the system(s)?

| Respondents | Yes | No | Do Not Know | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 35 (97%) | 1 (3%) | 0 | 0 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 23 (77%) | 1 (3%) | 3 (10%) | 3 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 103 (57%) | 18 (10%) | 6 (3%) | 54 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 12 (100%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 48 (83%) | 2 (3%) | 0 | 8 | 58 |

Table 21: Has your dept./office provided for the management of computer-generated records?

| Respondents | Yes | No | Do Not Know | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 31 (86%) | 3 (8%) | 1 | 1 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 13 (43%) | 5 (17%) | 8 (27%) | 4 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 48 (27%) | 72 (40%) | 13 (7%) | 48 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 9 (75%) | 3 (25%) | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 35 (60%) | 15 (26%) | 2 (3%) | 6 | 58 |

Table 22: Is your storage for electronic records satisfactory?

| Respondents | Yes | No | Do Not Know | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 24 (67%) | 5 (14%) | 6 (17%) | 1 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 16 (53%) | 2 (7%) | 7 (23%) | 5 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 57 (31%) | 39 (22%) | 26 (14%) | 59 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 7 (58%) | 3 (25%) | 1 (8%) | 1 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 28 (48%) | 9 (16%) | 15 (26%) | 6 | 58 |

Table 23: Are computer files regularly backed-up?

| Respondents | Yes | No | Do Not Know | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 35 (97%) | 1 (3%) | 0 | 0 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 21 (70%) | 2 (7%) | 4 (13%) | 3 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 120 (66%) | 12 (7%) | 2 (1%) | 47 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 11 (92%) | 0 | 1 (8%) | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 49 (84%) | 1 (2%) | 3 (5%) | 5 | 58 |

Table 24: Are security copies stored?

| Respondents | Off-site | In Office | Do Not Know | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| County Clerk & Recorders | 24 (67%) | 16 (44%) | 2 (6%) | 0 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 11 (37%) | 5 (17%) | 10 (33%) | 3 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 46 (25%) | 69 (38%) | 14 (8%) | 49 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 6 (50%) | 1 (8%) | 4 (33%) | 1 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 26 (45%) | 9 (16%) | 18 (31%) | 5 | 58 |

Table 25: Where do you presently obtain advice about record management and archival matters? (Check all that apply)

| Professional Advice | County Clerk & Recorders | County Court Clerks | Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | Colleges/Universities | State Agencies |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Professional Organization | 7 (19%) | 2 (7%) | 65 (36%) | 9 (75%) | 5 (9%) |
| Publications | 6 (17%) | 3 (10%) | 49 (27%) | 5 (42%) | 8 (14%) |
| Colleagues in other counties/cities | 12 (33%) | 7 (23%) | 71 (39%) | 3 (25%) | 3 (5%) |
| State agency | 30 (83%) | 27 (90%) | 102 (56%) | 8 (67%) | 55 (95%) |
| Paid consultants | 2 (6%) | 1 (3%) | 7 (4%) | 1 (8%) | 1 (2%) |
| Other | 5 (14%) | 1 (3%) | 16 (9%) | 0 | 2 (3%) |
| No Responses | 2 | 2 | 16 | 0 | 2 |

Table 26: Please prioritize your agency's greatest needs. (Use the following ratings: 1= High priority, 2 = Medium priority, 3 = Low priority.)

• All Local Government Respondents

| Greatest Needs | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Development of disaster plan | 56 of 143 | 48 of 143 | 39 of 143 |
| Management of computer records | 54 of 152 | 55 of 152 | 43 of 152 |
| Preservation of historical records | 73 of 163 | 54 of 163 | 36 of 163 |
| Professional information & staff training | 41 of 143 | 59 of 143 | 43 of 143 |
| Records retention scheduling | 68 of 149 | 38 of 149 | 43 of 149 |
| Records storage space | 53 of 150 | 49 of 150 | 48 of 150 |

• Municipal Clerks

| Greatest Needs | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Development of disaster plan | 35 of 91 | 32 of 91 | 24 of 91 |
| Management of computer records | 32 of 94 | 37 of 94 | 25 of 94 |
| Preservation of historical records | 45 of 104 | 37 of 104 | 22 of 104 |
| Professional information & staff training | 29 of 94 | 38 of 94 | 27 of 94 |
| Records retention scheduling | 45 of 98 | 26 of 98 | 27 of 98 |
| Records storage space | 24 of 93 | 35 of 93 | 34 of 93 |

• Municipal Court Clerks

| Greatest Needs | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Development of disaster plan | 7 of 14 | 4 of 14 | 3 of 14 |
| Management of computer records | 5 of 16 | 6 of 16 | 5 of 16 |
| Preservation of historical records | 2 of 12 | 3 of 12 | 7 of 12 |
| Professional information & staff training | 2 of 12 | 5 of 12 | 5 of 12 |
| Records retention scheduling | 7 of 13 | 1 of 13 | 5 of 13 |
| Records storage space | 8 of 16 | 5 of 16 | 3 of 16 |

• County Clerk & Recorders

| Greatest Needs | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Development of disaster plan | 13 of 23 | 6 of 23 | 4 of 23 |
| Management of computer records | 14 of 26 | 5 of 26 | 7 of 26 |
| Preservation of historical records | 19 of 28 | 7 of 28 | 2 of 28 |
| Professional information & staff training | 8 of 21 | 9 of 21 | 4 of 21 |
| Records retention scheduling | 11 of 22 | 4 of 22 | 7 of 22 |
| Records storage space | 8 of 21 | 5 of 21 | 8 of 21 |

• County Court Clerks

| Greatest Needs | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Development of disaster plan | 1 of 15 | 6 of 15 | 8 of 15 |
| Management of computer records | 3 of 19 | 7 of 16 | 6 of 16 |
| Preservation of historical records | 7 of 19 | 7 of 19 | 5 of 19 |
| Professional information & staff training | 2 of 16 | 7 of 16 | 7 of 16 |
| Records retention scheduling | 5 of 16 | 7 of 16 | 4 of 16 |
| Records storage space | 13 of 20 | 4 of 20 | 3 of 20 |

• All State Government Respondents

| Greatest Needs | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Development of disaster plan | 17 of 48 | 13 of 48 | 18 of 48 |
| Management of computer records | 19 of 45 | 18 of 45 | 8 of 45 |
| Preservation of historical records | 13 of 43 | 16 of 43 | 14 of 43 |
| Professional information & staff training | 13 of 40 | 13 of 40 | 14 of 40 |
| Records retention scheduling | 13 of 47 | 16 of 47 | 18 of 47 |
| Records storage space | 21 of 49 | 19 of 49 | 9 of 49 |

• Colleges/Universities

| Greatest Needs | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Development of disaster plan | 5 of 10 | 3 of 10 | 2 of 10 |
| Management of computer records | 5 of 10 | 3 of 10 | 2 of 10 |
| Preservation of historical records | 3 of 9 | 4 of 9 | 2 of 9 |
| Professional information & staff training | 2 of 9 | 5 of 9 | 2 of 9 |
| Records retention scheduling | 1 of 9 | 2 of 9 | 6 of 9 |
| Records storage space | 2 of 10 | 4 of 10 | 4 of 10 |

• State Agencies

| Greatest Needs | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Development of disaster plan | 12 of 38 | 10 of 38 | 16 of 38 |
| Management of computer records | 14 of 35 | 15 of 35 | 6 of 35 |
| Preservation of historical records | 10 of 34 | 12 of 34 | 12 of 34 |
| Professional information & staff training | 11 of 31 | 8 of 31 | 12 of 31 |
| Records retention scheduling | 12 of 38 | 14 of 38 | 12 of 38 |
| Records storage space | 19 of 39 | 15 of 39 | 5 of 39 |

Table 27: Do you have regular contact with the Colorado State Archives?

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------|
| County Clerk & Records | 28 (78%) | 8 (22%) | 0 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 12 (40%) | 13 (43%) | 5 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 62 (34%) | 111 (61%) | 8 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 3 (25%) | 9 (75%) | 0 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 29 (50%) | 29 (50%) | 0 | 58 |

Table 28: Would you be interested in receiving a professional on-site consultation with a Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board representative?

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------|
| County Clerk & Records | 19 (53%) | 15 (42%) | 2 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 6 (20%) | 21 (70%) | 3 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 74 (41%) | 92 (51%) | 15 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 2 (17%) | 8 (67%) | 2 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 18 (31%) | 35 (60%) | 5 | 58 |

Table 29: Would like to receive a report summarizing the results of this survey?

| Respondents | Yes | No | No Respondents | Totals |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------|
| County Clerk & Records | 24 (67%) | 7 (19%) | 5 | 36 |
| County Court Clerks | 15 (50%) | 12 (40%) | 3 | 30 |
| Municipal Clerks/Court Clerks | 119 (66%) | 46 (25%) | 16 | 181 |
| Colleges/Universities | 6 (50%) | 3 (25%) | 3 | 12 |
| State Agencies | 37 (64%) | 18 (31%) | 3 | 58 |

Local and State Government Records Program Assessment

APPENDIX C: Definition of Terms

Access: the ability of the people of Colorado and other interested persons to locate and use records in accordance with Colorado Open Public Records Act.

Appraisal: the process of determining the value and thus the final disposition of records, making them either temporary or permanent.

Archives: 1) the non-current records of an organization preserved for reference or research purposes that have continuing, or enduring, value because they reflect significant events or document the history of the organization. 2) The office responsible for the orderly collection of appropriate archival materials. 3) The place where archival materials are stored and where the State's records center is located.

Archivist: a person who manages or directs one or more of the following: the appraisal, accessioning, preservation, arrangement, description, and reference service of an archives.

Backing Up: making a copy of a computer files for use if the original is lost, damaged, or destroyed.

Computer-Assisted Retrieval (CAR): a micro-imaging system that provides a bridge between traditional microforms and electronic records.

Digital: representing data as discrete variables in the form of numerical characters, as in a digital clock or digital computer.

Disposal: the process of destroying obsolete records.

Disposal Schedule: same as Records Schedule.

Disposition: the actions taken to change the custody of non-current. These actions include transfer to agency storage facilities or the State Archives and disposal.

Electronic Recordkeeping: the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of records created and stored by using a computer.

Files Management: applying records management principles and techniques to filing practices in order to organize and maintain records properly, retrieve them rapidly, ensure their completeness, and make their disposition easier.

Medium (Media): the physical form of recorded information. Includes paper, film, disk, magnetic tape, and other materials on which information can be recorded.

Microform: a term used for any media or form containing microimages.

Obsolete Records: records no longer required in conducting agency business, and therefore, ready for final disposition.

Preservation: the provision of adequate facilities to protect, care for, or maintain records. Also, specific measures, individual and collective, undertaken to maintain, repair, restore, or protect records.

Public Records: all writing made, maintained, or kept by the department or an agency for use in the exercise of functions required or authorized by law, administrative rule or involving the receipt or expenditure of public funds. "Writings" means and includes all

books, papers, magazines, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics including records in computerized format.

Records Center: a facility for the low-cost storage and servicing of inactive or semi-active records pending their disposal or transfer to the State Archives.

Records Custodian: the division head, section head, or assigned employee, who is responsible for the maintenance, care, and keeping of public records, regardless of whether such records are in his or her actual physical custody and control. Also called records officer or records manager.

Records Liaison Officer: the individual assigned responsible for overseeing an office's records management procedures, including files organization and maintenance, records inventorying, records transfer, and records destruction. Also called a records officer or records manager.

Records Management: the systematic control of the classification, maintenance, retention, retrieval, protection and preservation of an institutions records from creation to final disposition.

Records Series: a group of documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they relate to a specific function or subject, result from the same activity, document a specific kind of transaction, take a particular physical form, or have some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use.

Retention Period: the length of time that records are to be kept before they are eligible for destruction or archival preservation.

Retention Schedule: a comprehensive schedule of records series by department, indicating for each series the length of time it is to be maintained in office areas, or records centers, and when and if such series may be microfilmed, destroyed or transferred to an archives.

Vital Records: those records that are essential to the continuing operation of the local or state government. They are the records that would be required to resume and continue the operations of the government after a major disaster, such as a fire or flood, to protect the legal and financial interests of the government and to preserve the rights of the people. These records should be duplicates or extra copies, and stored off-site in a secure location. (Note: this term should not be confused with "vital statistics," which are records of births and deaths.)