

Office of Information Affairs

Disposition Application Quick Guide

All USDA Personnel* are responsible for the records they create, receive, and use. At USDA, we are required to retain, preserve and safeguard records and non-records subject to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Privacy Act (PA), Inspector General (IG) investigation, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) investigation, or litigation hold. It is up to each individual to follow Departmental policies for maintaining, protecting, preserving and using records and information.

*USDA Personnel are defined as Employees, Contractors, Students, Volunteers, Interns, Fellows, and Political Appointees.

USDA Agencies must complete a Disposition Application as a means to gain authorization and approval to [dispose of Federal Records](#). The term “Disposition” indicates either the destruction or deletion of temporary records, or the transfer of permanent records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) or Federal Records Center (FRC).

Disposition of electronic records follows the same rules as paper records, provided that there is Agency Records Officer (ARO) approval and a valid disposition authority provided by NARA.

USDA records and information must be retained according to NARA-approved Records Schedules* and NARA guidance, which can change frequently, often before copies of records schedules may be disseminated, potentially leading to unauthorized disposition.

*Records Schedules are legal documents that tell you how long to keep specific types of records and what should happen to those records when you no longer need them.

USDA records and information are subject to litigation, FOIA and other preservation holds, which the typical USDA Personnel does not have access to check. Records subject to litigation hold may not be moved without coordination with the Office of General Counsel (OGC).

USDA records disposition requires a check against active FOIA and litigation, audits and investigations, as well as civil rights complaints and other preservation holds, completed by the ARO and Records Management (RM) staff, attorneys, and other offices.

Program Office Staff and Agency Records Management work together to complete the Disposition Application. Once the Disposition Application is finalized, it is routed for final approval/concurrence before the records are destroyed. Please see below the required routing process for Disposition Applications:

1. Program Staff review;

2. Records Management review;
3. Stakeholder Review, including the following:
 - a. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Division;
 - b. Office of Inspector General (IG);
 - c. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR); and
 - d. Office of the General Counsel (OGC).
4. Departmental Records Officer (DRO) / ARO Approval; and
5. Disposition documentation.

To Obtain a Copy of the Disposition Application

- Contact your [Agency Records Officer](#).

For any questions, contact the Departmental Records Program:

Departmental Records Officer (DRO) Beatriz Collazo, at Beatriz.Collazo@usda.gov, or USDADepartmentalRecords@usda.gov.