

True Confessions: Reappraising & Deaccessioning

**Crowdsourcing Your Reappraisal, or How I Learned to Stop
Worrying & Get Rid of Grant Files**

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Intro – My name is Marcella Huggard (formerly Wiget), and I’m an unrepentant reappraiser! I’m currently the archives and manuscripts coordinator at the Kenneth Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas, but until October last year I was public records program supervisor at the Kansas Historical Society in the State Archives. The project I’m discussing today took place last year at KSHS.

Kansas Historical Society – State Archives

Timeline

- December 2014: announce closure of State Records Center (SRC)
- February 2015: reappraisal of records stored at SRC begins in earnest; survey sent out to records officers
- March 2015: recommended revisions to certain general schedule entries brought to State Records Board
- June 2015: all records stored at SRC removed, KSHS out of rented property

Quick overview of the project – due to budgetary issues and especially due to the Dept of Admin negotiating contracts with private records storage companies, no longer viable for KSHS to operate a State Records Center. Announced the closure in December and had about 6 months to complete moving about 60,000 boxes out of the 2 warehouses KSHS was renting for this purpose. Bulk of those boxes were for temporary records; about 7,000 were theoretically supposed to come to the State Archives.

Grant-related records

Grants received by state agencies

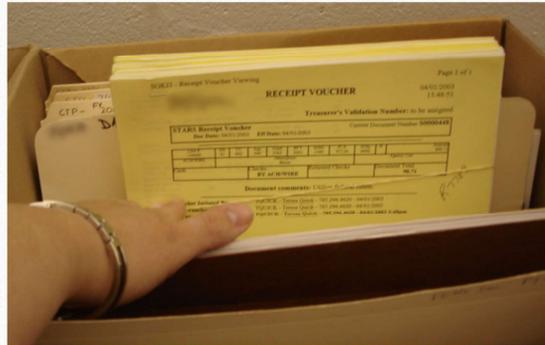
- General & agency-specific schedules
- funded – retain 5 fiscal years in-office, transfer significant documentation to archives, destroy remainder.
- Unfunded – retain until no longer useful, then destroy

Grants provided by state agencies to local organizations

- Unscheduled
- Approximately 450 cubic feet of grant records from 3 main agencies at SRC

Today I'm going to focus on the grant-related records that were supposed to come to the archives, as this test case is what made the State Archivist, me, and the electronic records manager decide to bring several general retention and disposition schedule entries to the state agencies' records officers and the State Records Board for revision. Grants were not well-scheduled in Kansas: the two entries on the books focused solely on grants received by state agencies. The bulk of the records created and held by state agencies, however, were for grant programs administered through state agencies. Simply by pulling out of the SRC's database data about grant-related records from 3 agencies whose programs almost solely function through grants, we realized if we reappraised and rewrote the general schedule we could potentially remove about 450 boxes of grant records before they crossed our threshold.

What we actually typically got with grant files



It should be noted that even under the existing general schedule, agencies were *only* supposed to transfer significant documentation from individual grants – i.e. applications, annual and final reports, those types of records. Instead you can see from these pictures what we actually typically got—all the transactional, routine detritus explicitly NOT supposed to come. These records were directly transferred a few years ago from an agency whose name is hopefully not visible on any of the paperwork and I’m certainly not going to mention who it is. In the SRC database many grant boxes had notes like “Will need to be purged,” added either by the agency, SRC staff, or archivists like me reviewing the materials over the years.

Revise the general schedule! – but how, in short amount of time with required participation of records and program officers?





SurveyMonkey

- Open to records and program officers for just over 3 weeks
- Provided revised language for several general schedule entries:
 - Grants received by state agencies: send to archives
 - Grants administered by state agencies: DESTROY (other than program documentation)
- State agency staff could vote yes or no and provide comments

Created an electronic survey to send out to all state agency records officers, including records officers at Board of Regents' universities. Encouraged records officers to share with program staff who would be affected by the retention requirement changes

SurveyMonkey, cont.

- 45 responses to survey overall (sent to 85 email addresses)
- 7 skipped question about grants applied for by agencies – other 38 agreed to changes
- 6 skipped question about grants administered by agencies – other 39 agreed to changes
- Comments mostly engaged with retention period length, not with actual reappraisal

Outcomes

- Boxes reviewed at SRC: several on-the-spot determined to be new entry for grants administered by state agencies; handful determined to have program documentation and retained at archives
- Approximately 525 cubic feet of grant records from 9 agencies destroyed or returned to agency

Thank you!

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- Marcella Huggard: mhuggard@ku.edu
 - Case study on this same project goes into more detail:
<http://files.archivists.org/pubs/GovtRecordsCaseStudies/CASE-1-MacroReappraisal.pdf>
 - State Records Board packet from March 2015 with full survey results:
http://www.kshs.org/government/records/stategovt/graphics/srb_meetings/20150326_srb_packet.pdf