

Message for Pennsylvania Agency Heads and Deputies:

The Pennsylvania State Archives needs to document your agency's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we need your help. Future historians, as well as future staff of your agency, will benefit from the records you keep now. They will reveal how your agency communicated with the public and how you directed staff to continue their daily service to Pennsylvania citizens while remaining safe and healthy. The lessons you learned along the way may also assist your agency in planning for or responding to a future crisis. Many are looking back to the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918 to see how the government and citizens coped and handled a pandemic. We are fortunate that many of our state agencies have preserved correspondence, photos and reports from that time in the State Archives. Future generations will thank you if you do the same thing now.

While maintaining your normal records according to state records retention schedules, keep in mind any unusual or out-of-the-ordinary methods of communication, either with staff or the public, related to COVID-19 should be scheduled for permanent retention. You might not collect or create all these types of documents but we suggest paying attention to record types related to the following functions:

1. **Agency Management:** What memoranda, procedures, and other working records were created specific to the COVID-19 state of emergency? How have offices coped internally with the unique problems created by COVID-19?
2. **Asset Management:** How has COVID-19 affected facilities and inventory management?
3. **Education:** Are there courses or assessments that have changed, expanded, or been repurposed during the pandemic?
4. **Governance:** Are you capturing the minutes of special sessions of advisory boards, commissions, task forces, and working groups?
5. **Research:** Are you doing research or producing data related to COVID-19 and its impact on Pennsylvania?
6. **Human Resources:** What correspondence, memos, or training materials have you produced to keep your employees and the public safe?
7. **Legal:** Are there COVID-19 related contracts, legal opinions, new precedents, or settlements that shed light on your agency's response to the pandemic.
8. **Monitoring and Compliance:** Have you provided assistance to other agencies, local government, or outside entities and individuals related to the COVID-19 pandemic? Have you created any special registries or permits?
9. **Public Relations:** What brochures, pamphlets, educational materials or other materials have you created to communicate with the public? Are you receiving any comments, complaints, or petitions from the public that seem historically significant?
10. **Risk Management:** Have you issued new alerts or created healthy and safety records as a result of COVID-19?

We appreciate your help in preserving the challenges and successes of Pennsylvania's state government and its staff as we weather this pandemic.