Archiving and Records Management

Defining Records

All records are documents, but not all documents are records. A document can be a contract, email, business negotiation, etc. If it relates to the legal obligations, evidence, or business transactions, the document becomes part of the legal record. When identifying a record, it is necessary to consider the purpose of the document.

- Is it personal, or business?
- Does it relate to a transaction?
- Does it reflect any company actions or activity?
- Does it have legal implications?

Once a document has been identified as a record, it must be carefully maintained for future use.

What is Records Management?

Records management systems will create uniformity and understanding. Regardless of how the records management system is organized, the management will affect the way that data is collected, stored and accessed.

Aspects of Records Management

- Establish a company filing system that is uniform
- Determine the storage of physical and confidential records
- Develop programs for consistent management of records
- Create archives and resource libraries

Over the course of this instruction, you will develop a better understanding of these aspects and how they connect in records management and which of work in different organizational settings.

Archives vs. Records

Records can become part of archives. Archives are records that are no longer current but are preserved past average records. Records are kept for varying lengths of time, depending on what they are. Once documents pass the necessary time for storage, they are disposed, or they are placed in archives. Archives typically have a historical, political, or legal reasons. They have value for the long-term. For example, documents that provide legal protections might be archived along with the founding documents of an organization. When choosing to dispose of documents in records or keeping them, remember that only a few of the documents will be archived. Archives may be stored on site, although some institutions will keep them offsite. Larger organizations with multiple locations are more likely to use offsite archives.