

Management and Preservation of Michigan Government Information

In this day and age, information and access to information is something we tend to take for granted. The television, the telephone and the Internet, can answer many of our questions almost instantaneously. It is rare that we give much thought about how this information is collected and preserved, or who is responsible for these functions. This brochure specifically addresses Michigan government information and the agencies directly responsible for its preservation. Michigan compiles an enormous amount of information every year, information that is important to all citizens of the state, whether they are a legislator or a school-age child. It is a necessary responsibility of all state agencies to make this information accessible and we hope that this brochure will help you understand your role in this endeavor.

Who Collects Government Information?

Both the **Library of Michigan** and the **State Archives of Michigan** collect and preserve government information in the form of Michigan documents and public records.

The **Library of Michigan** collects 65 gratis copies of each Michigan document which is published and/or distributed outside of the authoring agency. Three of these copies are kept within the Library's own collections, while the remaining documents are redistributed to libraries across the state, providing all citizens with access to the information.

The **State Archives of Michigan** identifies and preserves significant original records created by government agencies. The State Archives protects these valuable government records and makes them available to government employees and the public.



Library of Michigan

Library of Michigan

In 1829, the Michigan Legislative Council passed a resolution directing the deposit of thirty copies of laws and journals of council sessions to be placed in the Legislative Council Library. This was the beginning of what is today, the collection and distribution of thousands of Michigan documents to libraries state and nationwide. Supported by Public Act 540 of 1982 and Executive Directive 1983-2, the Library of Michigan preserves and distributes valuable statistical, historical, and educational information about all aspects of Michigan to designated depository libraries. Michigan document depository libraries are geographically located within the state to insure every Michigan citizen free and equal access to published government information.

What is a Michigan Document?

A Michigan Document is defined as information, regardless of form or format, which is created or compiled for publication or distribution outside the authoring agency by a component of Michigan state government. This definition does not apply to original public records which are required for internal use only and are created strictly for administrative or operational purposes. The State Archives is responsible for preserving original government information.

Publications for Purchase

Also included in the definition of a Michigan document are publications offered for purchase by the authoring agency. These documents are usually particularly valuable for their content and/or format, and are highly prized by the depository libraries that receive them. Though there is a cost to the creating agency, the distribution program should be seen as a tool, providing a larger and more visible market for the publication and garnering more sales. State agencies are required by law to furnish 65 gratis copies of all publications to the Library of Michigan for the distribution program.

Examples of Michigan Documents Collected by the Library of Michigan:

Copies of:

Reports

Bulletins

Circulars

Examinations

News releases

Manuals and handbooks

Statistics

Bibliographies

Brochures

Maps and posters

Periodicals and newsletters

Laws, rules and regulations NOT codified in the *Michigan Administrative Code* or the *Michigan Compiled Laws*

Reports, proceedings, and minutes of conferences, commissions, and boards

Audio and Video recordings

CD-ROMs and other electronic formats

Hearings (of general public interest only)

Directories, registers & rosters

State Archives of Michigan

State Archives of Michigan

In 1913 the Michigan State Legislature passed Public Act 271 creating the Michigan Historical Commission and giving the Commission the authority "...to collect, arrange and preserve historical material." This legislation was the beginning of the State Archives of Michigan, now part of the Michigan Historical Center in the Department of State, as an entity devoted primarily to preserving governmental records. The State Archives of Michigan continues to identify and acquire state and local government records that must be preserved permanently. The State Archives makes the records in its holdings available to the public for research and reference, unless access to the records is restricted by law.

What is a Public Record?

A "public record" is "...a record created or possessed by an agency pursuant to law or under color of law in connection with an activity relating to or affecting the transaction of the agency's business, and that is created or maintained by the agency as evidence of the agency's organization, function, policy, decisions, operation, or activity, or because of the record's informational value." This definition does not include records which are loaned to an agency. According to the Freedom of Information Act, Public Act 442 of 1976 as amended, a public record can be "a handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photographing, photocopying, and every other means of recording, and includes, letters, words, pictures, sounds, or symbols, or combinations thereof, and papers, maps, magnetic or paper tapes, photographic films, or prints, microfilm, microfiche, magnetic or punched cards, disks, drums, or other means of recording or retaining meaningful content."

Examples of Public Records Collected by the State Archives of Michigan:

Agencies should refer to their Retention and Disposal Schedule for detailed information about the management and preservation of their records.

- Letters, memos, e-mail (printouts with transmission information) and other correspondence
- Subject files, word processed records (printouts)
- Unpublished reports (project reports, annual reports, monthly reports, etc.)
- Original (signed) meeting minutes and agendas
- Policies, procedures, manuals (designed for internal office use)
- Legislative bill analyses and records relating to legislation
- Tapes and transcripts of meetings, commissions, boards, etc.
- Photographs (primarily black and white), slides, negatives
- Films, videos, audio visual materials
- Unpublished maps and drawings
- Microform reproductions of records
- Computer databases, spreadsheets



