Finding Aid Guidance for Textual Records in the Washington, DC Area

All transfers to the National Archives must be accompanied with a folder title list.

Per 36 CFR 1232.16 permanent records transferred to an offsite storage facility must include a folder title list of the box contents. Detailed folder title lists (or finding aids) are necessary records management and archival life cycle resources which ensure NARA can implement reference and retrieval procedures and controls on accessioned holdings. Folder title lists are integral components of accessioning documentation and are required for all new accessions. A separate Electronic Records Archives (ERA) Transfer Request (TR) and folder title list is required for each individual records series.

For textual transfers, folder title lists are required for all Direct Offers and must be attached to the TR at the time of submission to NARA. An Excel spreadsheet is the preferred file format. Folder title lists as documented on the Records Transmittal and Receipts (SF-135) are accepted as folder title lists for records transferred through the Federal Records Center Program (FRCP) in accordance with 36 CFR 1233.10. Since NARA receives the SF-135 from the FRC, agencies are not required to attach the SFs-135 to ERA transfer forms for Annual Move transfers from Federal Records Centers.

At a minimum, the folder title lists must be sufficiently detailed to provide access to the records by National Archives staff, your agency staff conducting research at NARA, and members of the public. In some instances for Direct Offers, SFs-135 for records previously stored in the Federal Records Center system may be acceptable, however NARA generally requires a new list meeting the below requirements if the box contents have changed or if the original box list is insufficiently detailed.

A folder title list typically includes the following information for each folder:

- Box number

- File code or agency-assigned control number (if applicable)

- Succinct folder title reflecting the contents of the folder with all acronyms spelled out

- Date range of documents contained in the folder

- FOIA access restrictions (if applicable per access restrictions table)

  o If some information regarding folder content cannot be released to the public, please provide a releasable and a non-releasable version of the list.

- Flexible/big bucket crosswalk item (if applicable – please see additional guidance for transferring records under a flexible/big bucket schedule)

- Additional information facilitating access or use of the records (if applicable)

Additional Information:

- Loose sheets – place in a folder(s) and provide an appropriate title reflecting the contents.

- Untitled folders – provide an appropriate title reflecting the contents.

- Bound volumes – place in a file folder if the volume fits within the dimensions of the folder. If a bound volume does not fit into a file folder it may remain un-foldered and counted as a single file in the folder title list.

- Binders – three ring binders are accepted and inventoried as a single file. Please provide an appropriate title on the binder(s).

On rare occasion box lists may be appropriate for some transfers arranged chronologically. For example, if meeting minutes are arranged by meeting date for Fiscal Years 1980-1985, the box list would document the first folder and last folder in each box. If you believe a box list is sufficiently detailed please contact your accessioning point of contact prior to submitting your Transfer Request to NARA.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact your accessioning point of contact.