

ANNUAL REPORT of the Chief Records Officer

2022/23



Ministry of
Citizens' Services



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Minister's Message

November 23, 2023

The Honourable Raj Chouhan
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Suite 207 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4



Dear Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to present to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia a report of the Chief Records Officer for the 2022/23 fiscal year.

In doing so, I want to acknowledge the hardworking people across the public service whose dedication and commitment to information management is key to ensuring this government is accountable to British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Citizens' Services

pc: Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

The Importance of Effective Government Information Management

The [Information Management Act \(IMA\)](#) applies to all government ministries and to 41 broader public sector entities. These government bodies create, receive, and manage a significant amount of information related to their work.

Under the IMA, ministries and other government bodies are responsible for creating and maintaining records that adequately document significant decisions.

They are also responsible for ensuring that the records they create or receive in connection with government business are managed using an appropriate recordkeeping system in accordance with the Act and other applicable policy. For ministries, this includes the [Managing Government Information Policy](#).

Information management is crucial for government transparency and accountability. Effective information management has many benefits, including:

- » Supporting the design, development, implementation and evaluation of government programs, services, policies, standards, processes, and procedures;
- » Fostering informed decision making and effective risk management;
- » Facilitating accountability, confidentiality, transparency, and collaboration, allowing government to be more responsive to British Columbians;
- » Maintaining evidence of and information about business activities, transactions, and decisions;
- » Ensuring that government information is preserved for as long as it is required and is appropriately transferred to the government archives if it is determined to have permanent value; and
- » Ensuring the accessibility, discoverability, and usability of information over time.

The Mandate of the Chief Records Officer

The Chief Records Officer (CRO) is designated by the Minister of Citizens' Services under the Information Management Act (IMA). Current CRO, Charmaine Lowe, was designated by the Minister on April 4, 2022.

Section 3 of the IMA defines the mandate of the CRO:

- » To promote effective information management by government bodies;
- » To promote the preservation of valuable government information for current and future use;
- » To approve [Information Schedules](#) governing the holding, transferring, archiving, or disposing of government information;
- » To promote the preservation of valuable government information, including information of historical or archival value;
- » To manage the digital archives and promote its availability to the public; and
- » To examine, evaluate and report on the management of government information by government bodies and to make recommendations considered advisable.



Information Schedules

Information schedules govern how records are organized, managed, and eventually archived or disposed of.

Information schedules are based on the types of records they apply to, and include:

- » [Administrative Records Classification System \(ARCS\);](#)
- » [Operational Records Classification Systems \(ORCS\);](#) and
- » [Special Schedules.](#)

The benefits of effectively managing government information through information schedules include the following:

- » Records with enduring value as evidence of government actions and decisions are identified and managed appropriately;
- » British Columbia's collective recorded memory and heritage is preserved;
- » Records are not retained for longer than necessary, thereby implementing prudent information and financial management; and
- » Decisions about the disposal of government information are transparent, and decision makers can be held accountable for them.

Under section 4 of the IMA, the CRO may approve an Information Schedule if they are satisfied that the *“Information Schedule provides, with as much specificity as practicable, for the disposal of all information required to be disposed of by law and for the holding of all information required to be held by law.”*



2022/23 Highlights



In the 2022/23 fiscal year, the CRO approved five new or amended Information Schedules:

- 1 Phase I of the Transportation Infrastructure Projects and Development ORCS;
- 2 Financial Services Regulations ORCS, amendment 1;
- 3 Phase I of the Mines and Mineral Resources ORCS;
- 4 Health Professions Review Board Services ORCS; and
- 5 Information Technology Services ORCS, amendment 5.

In the 2022/23 fiscal year, the Ministry of Citizens' Services received and processed **801 applications** for appraisal under existing Information Schedules, representing over **12,000 boxes of records**.



Information Management Infrastructure

Ministries and government bodies use many systems and applications to support effective information management.

The Enterprise Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) is used in many ministries to manage both electronic and physical records throughout their lifecycle. The Archives and Records Information System (ARIS) is used to manage offsite records and archival holdings.

Government currently stores more than one million boxes of physical records — including records that must be maintained for decades for operational, legal, financial, or other purposes, and records that are permanently retained by the government archives. [Defined facility standards](#) help ensure government records are safe and secure.

2022/23 Highlights

In the 2022/23 fiscal year, the EDRMS system was:

- » Managing over 20,200,000 electronic documents; and
- » Tracking over 8,900,000 physical file folders and 260,000 boxes of physical records.

In the 2022/23 fiscal year, ARIS was centrally managing over **one million boxes** of records. If placed end to end, these boxes would stretch from Vancouver to Williams Lake.



2022/23 Highlights



In the 2022/23 fiscal year, CIRMO:

- » Processed 3,053 offsite transfer/scheduling requests;
- » Transferred 31,273 new boxes to storage;
- » Destroyed, in accordance with information schedules, 18,621 boxes from storage; and
- » Transferred 5,876 boxes to the custody of the BC Archives.

In the 2022/23 fiscal year, a project team was established to focus on developing systems, processes, and policy to support the ingestion, preservation, and access to archived digital information.



Policy, Training, and Support

The [Managing Government Information Policy](#) helps ministries understand their information management obligations. This policy contains requirements related to the lifecycle of information, from creation and use to classification, scheduling, and appraisal through to preservation and storage, transfer, or disposal.

The Ministry of Citizens' Services also offers training and support to B.C. Government employees, including online courses, webinars, and one-on-one consultations.



2022/23 Highlights



In the 2022/23 fiscal year, **5,143** B.C. Public Service employees enrolled in records management training courses.

In addition, seven targeted web training opportunities were offered, including "Ask an Expert" panel sessions, workshops, and subject matter expert presentations.



Partnership with the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum (RBCM) processes historically important physical government records for preservation in the BC Archives. The processing involves arrangement, description, and preservation activities. Preserving this information in government archives makes it accessible to British Columbians.

In early 2022, the Ministry of Citizens' Services and RBCM renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to March 31, 2027. The MOU recognizes the importance of ensuring physical records of historical value are preserved and made accessible to the people of British Columbia. Renewing this agreement emphasizes a mutual commitment to this shared goal.



Looking Forward: A Message from the Chief Records Officer

This report highlights key information management activities undertaken in the 2022/23 fiscal year.

I am confident that information management in the Government of British Columbia is effectively and responsibly keeping pace with changes in technology and practice. Information schedules, systems, policies, and training are all vital to the effective and transparent management of information.

As I look ahead to next year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all public sector employees who recognize the importance of, and prioritize, transparent and responsible information management every day.

Sincerely,

Charmaine Lowe
Chief Records Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister
Corporate Information and Records Management
Office of the Chief Information Officer
Ministry of Citizens' Services





Ministry of
Citizens' Services