



RIM *At-A-Glance*

Subject: How to Write for the Record

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| What is a record? | <p>A <i>record</i> is recorded information, regardless of form or characteristics, that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Made or received by FHFA in connection with the transaction of public business, and• Preserved or appropriate for preservation as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities or because of the informational value of data in them. <p><i>Recorded information</i> includes all forms of records, regardless of format, including information created, manipulated, communicated, or stored by FHFA. (44 USC 3301)</p> |
| Why are records important? | <p>Records are a critical information asset of FHFA. The quality of records may determine an agency's success or credibility. Examples of activities that should be recorded include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transactions such as in orders, payments, or contract awards;• Decisions, interpretations, or opinions that could result in new policies or procedures;• Supporting documents used in developing findings, making agency decisions, or writing opinions;• Activities required by regulation or law; and• Critical business activities of FHFA. <p>All Federal records have a lifecycle: they are created, used and stored, then either destroyed or sent to the National Archives. Throughout their use and maintenance, records must be reliable and available for retrieval, reproduction, and authentication. If not managed effectively, records can cost the agency time and money, as well as increase risks from litigation or negative publicity.</p> |
| Who is responsible for creating records? | <p>If possible, the record should be created by the person who is most directly involved in the action being recorded. In order to provide quality records that accurately reflect FHFA activities, information should be recorded as close as possible to the time of the action, or decision.</p> |

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| <p>How do I write for the record?</p> | <p>When writing for the record, ask yourself these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I the right person to author this record? • Would I or FHFA be embarrassed if it were published? • Am I confident that the content is accurate? • Do I have any hesitation signing my name to the document? <p>Do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only relevant facts. • Write clearly and concisely. • Indicate the source of your information, unless you have first-hand knowledge. • Send the record only to those who need to know. • Assume that the record will have a wide distribution which you cannot control. <p>Don't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make exaggerated claims. • Speculate or make assumptions. • Use jargon or ambiguous words and phrases. • Defame another's character. • Use sarcasm or irony; it does not work effectively in a business setting. |
| <p>Where can I find more information about Records Management?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your Office's Records Liaison; • Contact a member of the Records and Information Management at !OTIMRecordsManagementTeam@fhfa.gov; • Contact Susan Sallaway at 202-649-3674 or susan.sallaway@fhfa.gov. |