
Authority Budget Office Policy Guidance



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Supersedes: New

Subject: Posting and Maintaining Reports on Public Authority Web Sites

Statutory Citation: Chapter 766 of the Laws of 2005

Provisions: Consistent with the corporate governance principles of full disclosure, accountability and transparency embodied in the Public Authorities Accountability Act, public authorities, to the extent practicable, are to make information available to the public on their official Internet web sites. Specifically, Sections 2800(1)(b.), 2800(2)(b.) and 2896(1) of the Act require Public authorities to provide certain information to the Authority Budget Office (ABO), such as a mission description, summary of activities, annual financial statements, budgets, results of independent audits, and guidelines for the disposition of property. At the time this information is submitted to the ABO it should be posted on the authority's web site. The ABO is also required to make the reports it receives available to the public through its web site.

Authority Budget Office (ABO) Policy Guidance: The Authority Budget Office (ABO) is committed to the principles of public disclosure and the transparent reporting of public authority financial and management information. Making this data available to the public via an authority's Internet web site is an effective way to improve accountability and to promote public confidence in the practices and executive decisions of public authority boards and senior staff.

To fully comply with the intent of the Public Authorities Accountability Act, State and local public authorities are expected to post their annual reports, budget reports, independent audit reports, and various policies and procedures as filed with the ABO on their Internet web sites in a manner that would enable the user to easily find and navigate through the information. If an authority does not maintain its own web site, arrangements should be made to post these reports on the web site of the local government for whose benefit the public authority was created.

In addition to posting data on the web site, public authorities will be expected to maintain this information for specified periods of time (described below), depending on the nature and currency of the data.

Procedures for Retaining and Maintaining Information on Web Sites: The ABO recommends referring to the attached schedule for guidance concerning maintaining documents on an authority's web site. As a general rule, information

that is likely to remain static should be permanently posted to the web site but updated as necessary. Time sensitive documents, such as annual financial statements, should remain on the web site for at least two fiscal years following the year to which the information applies.

Public authorities should also consider the following when posting and maintaining documents to their web sites:

- Public authorities are responsible for the information posted on their web sites.
- The information provided must be reliable and complete.
- Web sites should be monitored and updated regularly and all applicable links should function properly.
- Users should be able to navigate through the web site with ease and have no trouble finding the desired information and documents.
- All documents should be prepared using common terminology that facilitates a better understanding of the content.

Policies for the Retention of Records: New York State has adopted rules and regulations that govern the retention and disposition of records. These rules require that, even after removing a record from its web site, a public authority must retain copies of all records, whether electronic or hard copy, for the stipulated time periods outlined in the schedules prepared by the State Archives. (Please refer to: www.archives.nysed.gov/a/records/index.shtml).

To ensure compliance with the policies of the New York State Archives, the ABO recommends that public authorities establish a records management program to promote efficient administration and management of the Authority's records. This involves maintenance, retention, and storage of official records based on their legal and administrative value to the authority. A record retention program would require public authorities to:

- Develop a records retention and disposition policy and ensure compliance by all staff.
- Ensure that authority records are maintained and disposed in compliance with regulations.
- Identify, protect, and preserve archival records.
- Establish a process to prepare and annually review and update the records management plan.

Proposed Schedule for Maintaining Information on Public Authority Web Sites

Document	Time Period Information Should Remain Posted on Web Site
List of Board Committees	Permanently. Update as necessary
Board Minutes	At least one year following the year in which the Board meetings were held
Board Duties and Responsibilities	Permanently. Update as necessary
Authority Bylaws	Permanently. Update as necessary
Organization Chart	Permanently. Update as necessary
Procurement Guidelines	Permanently. Update as necessary
Internal Control Certification	At least one year and until the next certification is completed and posted
Investment Report	At least two years following release of the report
Audit of Investments	At least two years following release of the independent audit report
Management Letter of Investment Audit	At least two years following release of the independent audit report
Audit of Financial Statements	At least two years following release of the report
Management Letter of Financial Statement Audit	At least two years following release of the report
Auditor's Report on Internal Controls	At least two years, consistent with the retention of the audited financial statements
Policies re: Acquisition and Disposal of Property	Permanently. Update as necessary
Annual Budget Report	Two years (should contain last year actual, current year projection and next year proposed)
Annual Report	
- Financial Summary	Two years
- Code of Ethics	Permanently. Update as necessary
- Operations and Accomplishments	Two years
- Projects Undertaken in last year	Two years
- Bond Schedule	Two years
- Assessment of Internal Controls	Two years
- Personal and Real Property Transactions	Two years