UUFA Records Retention Policy
Approved by the board June 12, 2013

Purpose
This policy defines principles and standards for the management and retention of records of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames (UUFA). It provides a framework for other directives, procedures, and retention schedules that pertain to specific types of UUFA records and record keeping practices.

Policy Statement
The records of the UUFA are valuable assets that contain information pertaining to the UUFA’s mission, initiatives, activities, operations, heritage, and legacy. Stewardship of information assets is an important responsibility. Records with lasting legal or operational value or those that document the UUFA’s history and accomplishments must be identified and preserved. Other records are to be discarded in an orderly manner according to the Retention Schedule.

Definition of UUFA Records
UUFA records include any and all recorded information that is created, received, or maintained by the UUFA’s employees, minister, board of directors, committees and groups in the course of UUFA business and that relate in any way to the UUFA’s mission, goals, objectives, organization, initiatives, operations, activities, heritage, or legacy.

This definition of UUFA records encompasses both originals and copies of recorded information in all formats and media, including but not necessarily limited to:

• Paper documents, including office documents, engineering drawings, architectural plans, and maps
• Photographic films and prints
• Computer files and databases stored on magnetic or optical media or online (cloud storage)
• Audio recordings
• Video recordings
This definition of UUFA records encompasses notes, working papers, and drafts of documents that are created, received, or maintained in any format or media.

**Ownership of UUFA Records**

All records created, received, or maintained by the UUFA in relation to the UUFA’s mission, goals, objectives, organization, initiatives, operations, activities, heritage, or legacy are UUFA property. No UUFA employee, officer, member or friend, by virtue of his or her position, has any personal or property right to or property interest in such records, even though he or she may be named as the author, recipient, or custodian of them.

Records developed in the course of the UUFA’s ministry are the property of the UUFA. This includes material such as lists of members or participants in UUFA programs and letters written by persons acting in an official capacity for the UUFA.

**Official Record Copy**

The official record copy, which serves the documentary needs of the UUFA, is, in most cases, a printed copy, which is also known as a “hard copy.” This means that the document is printed on paper and filed accordingly. The UUFA has designated a paper document to be the official record copy for most retention purposes. There are only a few exceptions to this policy; they include some accounting records, and some electronic media records (video tape, etc.). Official record copies are not necessarily original records. They may be photocopies, for example. The UUFA does not always have original records to serve as official copies. This is obviously the case with outgoing correspondence, where the original is sent to the addressee and the writer retains a copy.

**Retention Standards**

All UUFA records must be retained and disposed of in accordance with the following standards:

- The UUFA’s Records Retention Schedule specifies how long specific types of records are to be kept for legal reasons, to satisfy the UUFA operational requirements, and to document the UUFA’s values, history, and accomplishments.
• The UUFA’s records retention policies and practices will comply fully with all applicable laws and regulations. The UUFA will make and keep adequate records to document its compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

• Where the same information exists in multiple copies, the UUFA’s retention schedule designates one copy as the official copy to satisfy the stated retention requirements. The schedule lists records by department or other functional groupings. Unless otherwise specified, the official copy is held by the office that corresponds to the functional group under which the record is listed in the schedule. All other copies are considered duplicate records.

• The UUFA will never intentionally alter or destroy records that must be kept for pending or ongoing litigation, government investigations, tax audits, or other legal actions until those matters are resolved. Under those circumstances, all normally scheduled destruction should be suspended until the UUFA’s lawyer/auditor/accountant/committee has resolved the situation.

• Records will be destroyed promptly when the time periods specified in the UUFA’s retention schedule elapse in order to reduce the cost of storing, indexing, and handling the large quantity of records that would otherwise accumulate.

• The records will be destroyed in a manner appropriate to the contents of the records and to the media on which the records are made. Safety and security are also required elements in the destruction process.

• The UUFA will take all reasonable precautions and prudent actions to identify and safeguard records that are vital to the UUFA’s mission, goals, objectives, organization, initiatives, operations, activities, heritage, or legacy.

• Privacy and security of UUFA records must be appropriately assured. The UUFA’s Records Retention Schedule is developed by the Records Management Committee in consultation with the UUFA office and is also reviewed by the Finance Committee and legal and records management professionals as needed. Changes to the schedule are made if needed during its periodic review or as new or special conditions arise.

The foregoing retention standards apply to any and all records that are created, received, or maintained by office, committees, groups, minister, and also apply to UUFA records that may be maintained in the homes of employees or officers or other offsite locations. Records shall not be kept at members’ homes.
**Responsibility for Records Management Program**

The Records Managements Committee is responsible for establishing and implementing the UUFA’s records management program, including a comprehensive retention schedule that is based on the standards delineated above. The ultimate authority and responsibility for the UUFA records management program resides with this committee, which is guided by the policies and procedures approved by the UUFA Board of Directors.

**Compliance**

All UUFA employees, officers, members, and minister must comply fully and consistently with this policy for all UUFA records in their custody or under their supervisory control. Retention schedules should be implemented, and obsolete records discarded, at the earliest practical opportunity.

**Exclusions**

The following information-bearing objects are not considered records and, as such, are specifically excluded from the UUFA’s retention policy:

- Books, periodicals, catalogs, and other publications or library materials acquired solely for reference purposes
- Memorabilia and museum materials acquired solely for exhibition
- Unused or undistributed stocks of UUFA publications
- Blank business forms
- Unused copies of form letters
- Unsolicited brochures, flyers, advertisements, mass mailings, e-mail messages, or other records which are unrelated to UUFA business
- Unsolicited brochures, flyers, advertisements, mass mailings, e-mail messages, or other records which are from denominational organizations including other congregations, the district or regional offices, and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) offices
- Personal papers of UUFA employees (i.e., papers of a private nature that pertain solely to an employee’s personal activities and interests and have no relationship to the employee’s
assigned duties or to the UUFA’s mission, goals, objectives, organization, initiatives, operations, activities, heritage, or legacy).

**Interpretation and Assistance**

The office staff is responsible for implementing the records management program. Questions about interpretation and implementation of this policy or the UUFA’s record retention schedule and any related directives, procedures, or guidelines may be directed to the office staff, the treasurer, or the board of directors.