## Document Retention Policy Template

**Effective Date**: [Insert Date]  
**Revision Date**: [Insert Date]  
**Approved By**: [Insert Approving Body]

**1. Purpose**

To establish guidelines for the retention, storage, and secure disposal of organizational documents to ensure compliance with legal requirements, safeguard sensitive information, and maintain operational efficiency.

**2. Scope**

This policy applies to all organizational records, whether physical or electronic, created, received, or maintained by [ORGANIZATION NAME]. It covers records from all departments, including finance, HR, governance, and operations.

**3. Definitions**

1. **Record**: Any document or piece of information created, received, or maintained by the organization as evidence of its operations or legal obligations.
2. **Retention Period**: The minimum duration for which a record must be maintained to meet legal, regulatory, or operational requirements.
3. **Destruction**: Securely disposing of records that are no longer required for legal or operational purposes.

**4. Roles and Responsibilities**

1. **Executive Director**: Ensures overall compliance with the document retention policy.
2. **Department Heads**: Monitor and enforce retention practices within their departments.
3. **Records Officer**: Oversees document storage, retention schedules, and secure destruction processes.
4. **Employees**: Comply with document retention and disposal procedures.

**5. Retention Schedule**

The following categories outline the retention periods for specific types of records:

| **Category** | **Examples** | **Retention Period** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Governance Records** | Bylaws, Board Meeting Minutes | Permanent |
| **Financial Records** | Audited Financial Statements, Tax Filings (Form 990) | Permanent |
| **Accounting Records** | Invoices, Bank Statements, Payroll Records | 7 Years |
| **Employee Records** | Employment Agreements, Performance Reviews | 7 Years after Termination |
| **Contracts** | Vendor Agreements, Leases | 7 Years after Expiration |
| **Grant Records** | Proposals, Progress Reports | 7 Years after Completion |
| **Legal Records** | Litigation Files, Intellectual Property Documents | Permanent |
| **Program Records** | Participant Data, Reports | 5 Years |
| **Technology Records** | IT Backups, Security Logs | 1 Year |

**6. Storage Guidelines**

1. **Physical Records**:
   * Store in a secure, locked location with restricted access.
   * Use fireproof cabinets for critical documents.
2. **Electronic Records**:
   * Store on secure, password-protected servers or cloud systems.
   * Perform regular backups and ensure encryption of sensitive data.

**7. Secure Destruction**

1. **Eligible Records**: Documents past their retention period and no longer required for legal or operational purposes.
2. **Destruction Methods**:
   * Physical Records: Shred or use a certified disposal service.
   * Electronic Records: Use software to permanently delete files or physically destroy storage devices.
3. **Destruction Log**: Maintain a log of destroyed records, including the type of record, date, and method of destruction.

**8. Litigation Hold**

If the organization is involved in litigation or an investigation, all relevant records must be preserved until the issue is resolved. The Executive Director will notify staff of any litigation holds and suspend document destruction as necessary.

**9. Training and Awareness**

1. All employees must be trained on document retention and disposal practices as part of their onboarding process.
2. Conduct annual refresher training to ensure ongoing compliance.

**10. Policy Review and Updates**

1. This policy will be reviewed annually by [INSERT POSITION, E.G., Records Officer] to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory changes.
2. Updates must be approved by the Board of Directors.

**11. Approval and Adoption**

This policy was approved by the Board of Directors on [Insert Date].

**Signature**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name**: [Insert Name]  
**Title**: [Insert Title]  
**Date**: [Insert Date]