# Reporting Case Files

## DEFINITION OF A CASE FILE

A case file is a file maintained by a government agency that contains a group of related, but distinct, sets of records regarding a person, subject matter, or activity which are retained in one file. Examples of case files include:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Client File | Loan Application File | Grievance File |
| Patient Medical File | Inmate Institutional File | Personnel File |
| Investigative File | Student File | Legal Case File |
| Taxpayer File | Lessee File | Workers' Compensation File |
| License Application File | | |

## HOW TO REPORT CASE FILES

One Data Entry Form (DEF) is completed for the case file as a whole. Additional DEFs are completed for each identifiable set of records found within the case file. There are four ( 4) steps in filing a record report on agency case files.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare a DEF for the case file as a whole.

2. Identify all **sets** of records that are contained within the case file.

   Be sure to examine a **reasonable sampling** of the case files to get the broadest range of record sets that may be included in that particular type of case file.

   For example, one individual's personnel file may not include retirement or family leave information, if that individual has not retired or used family leave. However, to accurately represent all sets of records that may be maintained in a "Personnel File," it is important to sample many different personnel files, which should include active and retired employees' files.

3. Prepare a DEF for *each set* of records identified in step 2 above.

4. On the DEF in Field 28 (General Comments), specify the name of the case file in which the record being reported is retained. Use the following format:

   ***Retained in*** *<Enter File Name Here>* ***File.***

   This information links the individual sets of records to the case file as a whole.

**EXAMPLE:**

An agency maintains employee Personnel Files which contain a variety of personnel forms and records. The files are organized by the name of the employee to whom the file relates.

1.  Prepare a DEF Worksheet for the case file named "Personnel File." In Field 28 (Comments), include the following text:

    *Personnel Files contain a variety of personnel forms and correspondence.*
    *These case files are filed by employee name.*

2.  As a result of having examined a reasonable sampling of Personnel Files, which included both active and retired employees, the following are some of the identified sets of records that are routinely retained in a Personnel File:

    -Application for Employment
    -Application for Leave of Absence
    -Application for Transfer of Vacation and Sick Leave Credit
    -Attendance and Leave Record
    -Certificate of Medical Examination
    -Form HW-4
    -FormW-4
    -Job Performance Report
    -Letter of Appreciation/Commendation
    -Letter of Resignation
    -Notification of Personnel Action
    -Request for Family Leave
    -Resume

3.  Prepare a separate DEF for **each set** of records identified in step 2.

4.  For each of the DEFs prepared in step 3, in Field 28 (General Comments) include the following text:

    *Retained in Personnel File.*

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# Exceptions for Certain Unique Case Files

### HOW TO REPORT UNIQUE CASE FILES

Agencies need to complete only one (1) Data Entry Form ("DEF") for "case files" that contain records that are unique, or that cannot reasonably be broken down into individual sets of records. This kind of case file contains records that significantly vary from file to file. For example:

- Research Files

- Auditor's Working Papers

- Correspondence Files

  Complete only one (1) DEF for each identifiable type of correspondence file. Do not report each individual letter, memo, etc. For example: correspondence files of policymaking officials, correspondence files relating to program activities, and intradepartmental correspondence files.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare a DEF for the case file as whole.

2. In Field 28 (General Comments), briefly describe the contents of the case file, and how the file is organized within the agency's record keeping system.

## EXAMPLES

1. OIP maintains files called **"Correspondence File - Interdepartmental."**  The files are organized by the name of the State or county agency to which the correspondence relates.

   a) Prepare a DEF for the case file ""Correspondence File - Interdepartmental."

   b) In Field 28 (General Comments), include the following text:

      *This correspondence file contains memos and correspondence to and from State and county agencies. These files are organized by the name of the agency to which the correspondence relates.*

2. OIP maintains legal research files called **"Legal - Research."**  The files are organized by the subject matter or topic to which the research relates.

   a) Prepare a DEF for the file "Legal Research File."

   b) In Field 28 (General Comments), include the following text:

      *These research files contain a variety of research regarding freedom of information/right to privacy legal issues. The files are organized by the topic, or subject matter, to which the research relates.*