

City of Boston



Department Records Officer File Plan Guide



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CITY OF BOSTON - OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
Archives & Records Management Division

CITY OF BOSTON
LAW DEPARTMENT



The City's records are its information assets. Like all assets they must be cared for and managed. DoIT, the City Archives and the Law Department are collaborating to promote awareness of the obligations, benefits and resources of archives and records management. For questions, contact Patrick Collins (DoIT), John McColgan (Archives & Records), or Kevin Corridan (Law).



*Gas street lamp
#30 Pinckney Street, Beacon Hill
Photographer: James E. Miller, November 15, 1963
Street Lighting History Collection
(Collection #5030.003) [City of Boston Archives](#)*

FILE PLAN FAQs

What is a File Plan?

A File Plan is an inventory of the official records of a department, along with their legally mandated retention periods and disposition policies.

Each Department Records Officer (DRO) will have access to their Department's File Plan through a database created in the City's SharePoint site. This database is part of the "DRO Toolkit", an online interactive tool that enables collaboration between DROs and the Archives in developing the File Plan and maintaining records disposition procedures.

Why are File Plans so important?

The File Plan plays a vital role in the management of each Department's official records. Without a File Plan, no one can say with certainty which records are to be kept permanently and which records may be discarded and destroyed. A File Plan is needed in order to successfully manage the retention and disposition of records.

What are the benefits to my Department?

The benefits of exercising sound records management policy and procedures are three-fold:

- 1. Fulfills Legal Obligations**

Advances Department compliance with State Law, City policy and legally mandated retention schedules.

- 2. Generates Efficiencies**

Departments will have more efficient access to needed records and are likely to experience a reduction in storage costs and/or an increase of storage space

- 3. Preserves Documentary Heritage**

Departments will be better equipped to identify those records which document the history, organizational structure, and functions of the municipal government of the City of Boston.

What are the responsibilities of DROs?

DROs are responsible for acting as liaisons to the City Archives and ensuring the systematic disposition of department records.



*Proceedings of the Boston City Council, 1822-2000 [Aldermen minutes, 1822-1909],
(Collection # 0100.001), [City of Boston Archives](#)*



Mayor Kevin H. White with Boston Pops Conductor Arthur Fiedler at Fiedler's birthday party, 1977. Mayoral records 1968-1982 (Collection # 0245.001), [City of Boston Archives](#)

What is Records Disposition?

Disposition is the appropriate action once records become non-current or inactive, and/or when their retention period expires. There are three basic options:

1. **Destruction:** If the retention period has expired the records should be destroyed or deleted once approval has been obtained from the State. The City Archives orchestrates State authorization on behalf of departments.
2. **Storage:** Non-current records required to be retained for business or legal reasons may be stored off-site with the City's records center services vendor (Retrievex) until retention expiry.
3. **Archives Preservation:** Non-current or inactive hard-copy records with a "permanent" retention period must be transferred to the City Archives. Electronic archival records must be stored in the "Permanent" folder (in Enterprise Vault for email; in Files Systems Archives in the "H" drive for desktop files).

CREATING A FILE PLAN

Go to the DRO Toolkit:

<https://teamconnect.cityofboston.gov/solutions/dro>

The DRO Toolkit is a SharePoint site viewable by DROs and the City Archives. The site contains the File Plan database and links to resources critical to the systematic management of records (e.g. terms and definitions; state-approved retention schedules; workflow forms to apply for records destruction or archives transfer; records storage links; etc.):

City of Boston Archives
DRO Toolkit

Archives

Home Search this site...

Terms & Definitions
File Plan Data Entry Form
Recycle Bin
All Site Content

City Archives DRO Toolkit

Welcome to the City Archives "DRO Toolkit". The purpose of this site is to facilitate Department Record Officers in developing agency file plans and maintaining procedures for the systematic disposition of records as they become non-current. For detailed site instructions click on [How to Use this Site](#).

Below is the data input form for creating your department's file plan. Enter at least the required information to get started (i.e. field names marked with a red *). The more information you provide, the easier it will be to be your department's requirements to an existing City or State records retention schedule. For questions about developing the agency file plan, please email or call John McColligan or Dave Neilson in the Archives Division, 5-1195.

HOW TO USE THIS SITE

Agency File Series Input Form

Department:*

Division:

Department Files Series No.*

Department File Series Name.*

Department File Series Description:

Record Copy:

Personal or Financial Identity Info:

Departmental Links
[Archives File Plan](#)

Records Disposition Links
[Citywide Records Retention Schedule](#)
[SPR Schedule](#)
[Records Destruction Authorization Form](#)
[Records Destruction Certification Form](#)
[Archival Records Transfer](#)

[Add new link](#)

Offsite Storage Links
[FileLine Access Guide](#)
[Records Center Guidelines](#)
[Retrievex Inc.](#)
[Retrievex RC Charges](#)

[Add new link](#)

File Plan Database

The critical component of this site is the File Plan database. This is an inventory of the official records of a department along with their retention periods; it documents the policy basis for your department's records retention and disposal procedures.

To populate your file plan database, fill in each field of the Input Form and hit the Submit button:

Agency File Series Input Form

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Department:* | <input type="text" value="Archives and Records"/> |
| Division: | <input type="text"/> |
| Department Files Series No:* | <input type="text" value="ARCH-01"/> |
| Department File Series Name:* | <input type="text" value="Correspondence"/> |
| Department File Series Description: | <input type="text"/> |
| Record Copy: | <input type="text" value="Yes"/> |
| Personal or Financial Identity Info: | <input type="text" value="No"/> |
| Physical Format: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desktop Files <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Database <input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs |
| Department Series Retention: | <input type="text" value="3 years"/> |
| Disposition Policy or Procedure: | <input type="text" value="Destroy three years from end of current fiscal year"/> |
| Retention Schedule Reference: | <input type="text" value="ADM-10"/> |
| SPR: | <input type="text"/> |

To view the File Plan table you have created, click on the link to your Department.

| Department Name | Series # | Series Name | Series Description | Physical Format | Record Copy | PII/PFI | Retention | Disposition Policy | Retention Schedule Reference | SPR |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------|---------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-----|
| Archives and Records | ARCH-01 | Correspondence | Requests for records or information, and the responses. | Paper, Desktop Files, Email | Yes | No | 3 years | Retain current Fiscal Year plus three years, then destroy. | ADM-10 | |
| Archives and Records | ARCH-02 | Student Record Release Consent Forms | Completed forms, fax, and/or email. | Paper, Email | Yes | Yes | Longer than 7 years but not permanent | Retain until student graduates + sixty years, then destroy. See School Department File Plan BPS/SR-08. | | |

To edit data in the File Plan view, click on series number to bring up the edit screen:

Agency File Series - ARCH-01

View


Edit Item


Manage Permissions


Delete Item


Alert Me


Workflows

Manage Actions

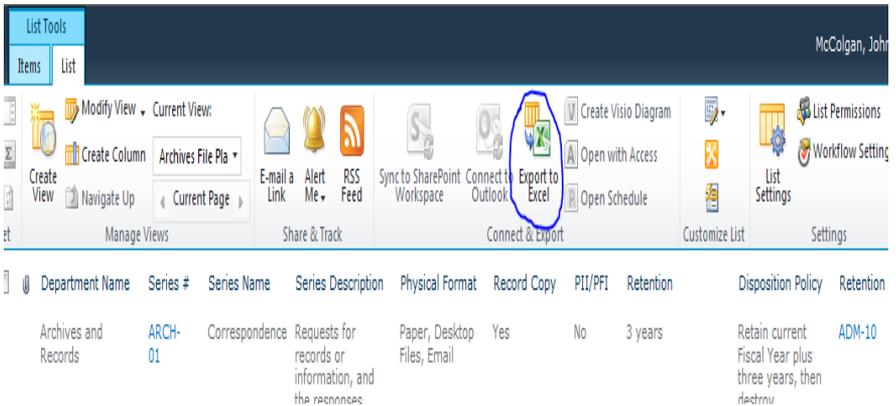
| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Department Name | Archives and Records |
| Division | |
| Series # | ARCH-01 |
| Series Name | Correspondence |
| Series Description | Email, Fax, Request Forms, requests for records or information, and the responses. |
| Physical Format | Paper; Electronic - Email |
| Record Copy | Yes |
| PII/PFI | No |
| Retention | 3 years |
| Disposition Policy | Retain current Fiscal Year plus three years, then destroy. |
| Retention Schedule Reference | ADM-10 |
| SPR | |
| *DELETE SERIES* | No |

Created at 9/27/2011 10:13 AM by [McColgan, John](#)
 Last modified at 10/17/2011 3:30 PM by [Collins, Patrick](#)

How do I determine the retention period of a records series?

Under "Records Disposition Links" you will find links to City and State retention schedules on which to base department retention policy in the File Plan. If you don't find the relevant item in the City-wide Retention Schedule, check the Supervisor of Public Records (SPR) municipal records schedule. If you still find no match, contact Archives personnel, who will help you evaluate the records based on operational, fiscal, legal or historical criteria.

To share the File Plan with records users in your department, you may export it to an EXCEL spread sheet. From the table view click on "List" under "List Tools", and then simply click on "Export to Excel":



The screenshot shows the SharePoint interface for a list. The 'List Tools' ribbon is visible, with the 'List' tab selected. The 'Export to Excel' icon is circled in blue. Below the ribbon, a table displays the following data:

| Department Name | Series # | Series Name | Series Description | Physical Format | Record Copy | PII/PFI | Retention | Disposition Policy | Retention |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|---|-----------|
| Archives and Records | ARCH-01 | Correspondence | Requests for records or information, and the response | Paper, Desktop Files, Email | Yes | No | 3 years | Retain current Fiscal Year plus three years, then destroy | ADM-10 |

SYSTEMATIC DISPOSITION

The File Plan is designed to be a reference tool for continuous use over time as retention periods expire and records become ready for disposition (destruction, off-site storage, or archival preservation). At appropriately determined intervals based upon each department's needs (e.g. yearly), the DRO must administer the disposition of records in accordance with the agency File Plan. Under "Records Disposition Links" you will find links to electronic workflow forms for:

- Obtaining destruction authorization from the State
- Certifying records destruction, and
- Transferring archival records to the City Archives

Records Disposition Links

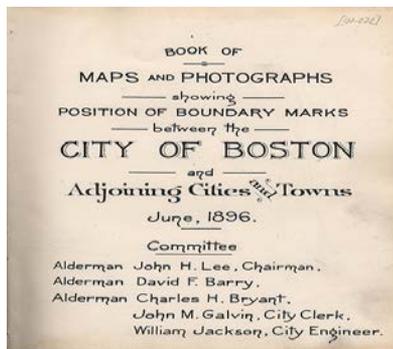
[City-wide Records Retention Schedule](#)

[SPR Schedule](#)

[Records Destruction Authorization Form](#)

[Records Destruction Certification Form](#)

[Archival Records Transfer](#)



Cover Page, *Perambulation of the Boundaries, 1896*
(Collection # 0100.013), [City of Boston Archives](#)



Perambulation of the Boundaries, 1896
Monument 126. (Collection # 0100.013) [City of Boston Archives](#)

To obtain authorization to destroy records:

In the *DRO Toolkit*, under “Disposition Links”, click on “Records Destruction Authorization Form”. This will bring you first to the HUB log-in, and then directly to an electronic workflow form. Follow the instructions and press “GO”. Your request to destroy obsolete records will be on its way to the Archives for review, and from there to successive approvals by the City Clerk, Corporation Counsel and the State Supervisor of Records.

|  | City of Boston <i>Office of the City Clerk</i> Archives and Records Management Division | 201 Rivermoor St. West Roxbury, MA 02132 P: 617-635-1195 F: 617-635-1194 E: archives@cityofboston.gov | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|----------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Application/Authorization for Records Destruction | | Req. No. 407 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Agency: Select One | Division / Unit: | Please Indicate Method of Destruction: Select One | | | | | | | | | | |
| Estimated Total Volume (in cubic feet) | To be destroyed within 90 days of approval at. | You may include up to 15 series on this application. Click Here for Help | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date of Last Applicable Audit: | <input type="radio"/> Originating Agency <input type="radio"/> City Archives / Records Center | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Series #</th><th>Series Title</th><th>Schedule #</th><th>Volume</th><th>Dates</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr></tbody></table> | | | Series # | Series Title | Schedule # | Volume | Dates | | | | | |
| Series # | Series Title | Schedule # | Volume | Dates | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Certification: I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, these records do not pertain to any current public records request or current or pending litigation to which this office is party. The records described above are no longer needed in daily operations of this agency. I recommend their destruction under Chapter 68 of the Acts of the 1998.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Agency Authorized Signatory email address: john.mccolgan@cityofboston.gov | City Clerk Decision: <input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied | Approved as to form: <input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Denied | | | | | | | | | | |
| Agency Authorized Signature | City Clerk | City of Boston Asst. Corporation Counsel | | | | | | | | | | |
| Agency Authorized Signature | City Clerk | City of Boston Asst. Corporation Counsel | | | | | | | | | | |
| Approved: _____ | _____ | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mass. Supervisor of Public Records | Date | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Decision Notes: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ver: 01/23/2012 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Submit Go | | | | | | | | | | |

Certifying Records Destruction

Once the Archives notifies you of State approval, destroy the records and verify destruction using the “Certificate of Records Destruction” form (also on the HUB and also linked from the *DRO Toolkit’s* “Disposition Links”).



City of Boston
Office of the City Clerk
Archives and Records Management Division

201 Rivermoor St.
West Roxbury, MA 02132
P: 617-635-1195
F: 617-635-1194
E: archives@cityofboston.gov

Certificate of Records Destruction

Note: This form must be completed by the employee who submitted the original Application/Authorization for Records Destruction. If you did not submit that form, you will be unable to complete this form.

Please enter the Request No. from the original records destruction application.

Lookup Application

Agency/Division/Unit:

To certify records that have been destroyed, indicate yes or no after each Series Title.

| Schedule # | Series Title | Destroyed? | Volume | Dates |
|------------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Select ▾ | | |

For which authorization to destroy has been obtained from the appropriate Agency Head, all necessary City Officials and the Supervisor of Public Records, have been destroyed accordingly.

Method of Destruction:

Place:

Agency Authorized Signatory email Address: [?](#)

john.mccolgan@cityofboston.gov

Agency Authorized Signature

Agency Authorized Signature

Ver: 02/24/2010

Submit ▾

Go



Sumner Tunnel Wall Washing Machine entering Boston Portal, 1946
Item 61-186, Sumner Tunnel, 9/26/46, Bridge and Ferry Photographs circa 1926-1947
(Collection # 5010.004), [City of Boston Archives](#)



*Old Agassiz School, Burroughs St., Jamaica Plain
School building photographs circa 1920-1960
(Collection # 0403.002), [City of Boston Archives](#)*

To store records off-site:

Under “Offsite Storage Links” you will find complete information on storing records at Retrievox.

[Offsite Storage Links](#)

[FileLine Access Guide](#)

[Records Center Guidelines](#)

[Retrievox Inc.](#)

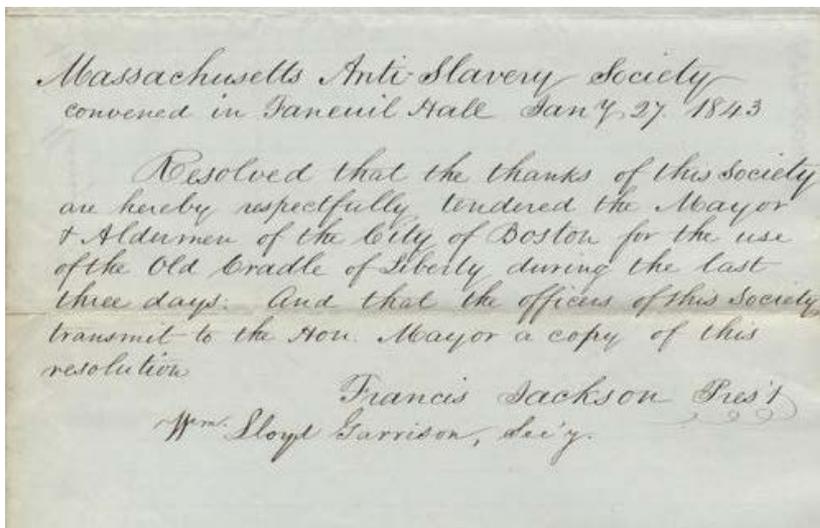
[Retrievox RC Charges](#)

The City contracts with a commercial records center, *Retrievox Inc.*, to provide secure storage and retrieval for records no longer regularly used, but which must be retained under your agency’s File Plan. Stored records may be retrieved on a day's notice (or earlier if needed at additional fee.) When records reach the end of their scheduled retention time, the Archives Division will notify you of their status, coordinate necessary City and state approvals, and arrange for Retrievox to shred them.

Archival Records

What are Archival Records?

Archival records are those which critically document policy and decision-making of City Departments, and therefore offer ongoing evidential and historical value to the City and society. They are scheduled for permanent retention on City and State retention schedules, and should be transferred to the Archives Center when no longer required for current business purposes. Although they play a very important role in documenting the history of our City, Archival records generally make up a small percentage of the overall records generated in the course of City business.



Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society
convened in Faneuil Hall Jan'y 27 1843

Resolved that the thanks of this Society
are hereby respectfully tendered the Mayor
& Aldermen of the City of Boston for the use
of the Old Cradle of Liberty during the last
three days: And that the officers of this Society
transmit to the Hon. Mayor a copy of this
resolution

Francis Jackson Pres't
Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Sec'y.

Letter from Francis Jackson and William Lloyd Garrison thanking the Board of Alderman for the use of Faneuil Hall for Anti-Slavery Society Meetings, 27 January 1843, City Council Proceedings, 1822-2002, (Collection # 0100.001)

To transfer records to the Archives:

1. Place records, in their original order, into records center cartons (H10" x W12" x L15") leaving several inches in the carton for easy retrieval.
2. Mark the boxes with a sequence number and information on content (identity, range, dates), and prepare a box list.
3. In the DRO Toolkit, under "Disposition Links", click on Archival Records Transfer Form. Follow instructions in filling out the form. Click the "Save and Send" button to create an email attaching the form. Attach the box list to the email and send it to archives@cityofboston.gov.

| Series # | Series Title | Volume | Dates |
|--|--------------|--------|-------|
| Please provide a brief description of the records series to be transferred in the field below, and attach a detailed list as a word document or excel sheet. | | | |

I hereby authorize the transfer of records to the City of Boston Archives.

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Records Received By: _____ Request Status:

Records Received By (Archives Staff Member): _____ Date: _____

Click "Go" to submit your form -->

4. Contact the Archives (617-635-1195) to discuss transport arrangements.

Once at the Archives Center, records are secured in an environmentally controlled facility and managed by professionally trained archivists. Archives staff will prepare descriptive finding aids and make records available to departments and to the public in accordance with the public records laws and any legal restrictions that may apply.

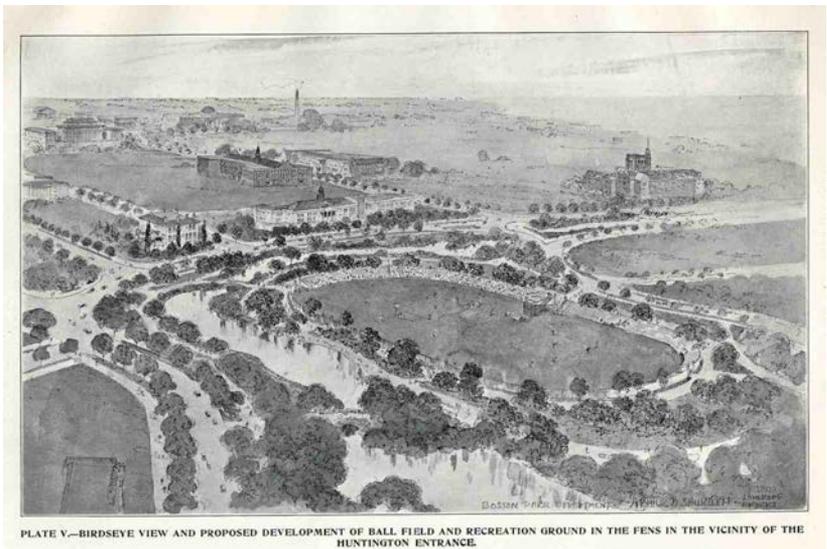


PLATE V.—BIRDSEYE VIEW AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF BALL FIELD AND RECREATION GROUND IN THE FENS IN THE VICINITY OF THE HUNTINGTON ENTRANCE.

Sketch of Proposed Ball Field and Recreation Ground in the Fens, 1925, Parks Department Special Report, Parks and Recreation Department Annual Reports and Publications, 1875-1993, (Collection # 4400.005)

HALL IN JOY'S BUILDING,
No. 81, WASHINGTON STREET.

FLEAS.



THE LEARNED AND INDUSTRIOUS FLEAS.

From Paris, the only ones that have obtained brilliant success in the principal cities of Europe, and the same that have gained their suit in Paris on the 31st of last November, after having worked before their Majesties the King and Queen of the French, and before all the Royal Family.

PATRONIZED BY THE ROYAL FAMILY OF ENGLAND.

Will be seen in the Grand Ball Room, TWO FLEAS DRESSED AS LADIES, AND TWO OTHERS AS GENTLEMEN, dance a waltz; ten Fleas in the Orchestra exercise on various instruments proportioned to their size, (the Orchestra is directed by Mr. HABENECLA, of Paris, who is also a Flea.) The music is distinctly heard. The Saloon is elegantly decorated, and splendidly lighted with chandeliers.



A CARRIAGE DRAWN BY TWO FLEAS, completely harnessed. You perceive in the coach my Lord and my Lady, (Fleas,) who are going to render a visit; the coachman, who is also a Flea, dressed in livery, has in his hand a whip, with which he whips his horses.

A MAN-OF-WAR, armed with 120 pieces of Cannon, completely rigged with masts, sails, ropes, &c., drawn by a single Flea.



A DUEL OF LIFE OR DEATH, between two Fleas, who decide with foils in their hands, an affair of honor. (Their arms are of steel.)

A FLEA DRESSED IN BLUE, will draw a bucket of water out of a well.

A GOLDEN CANNON, with all its apparatus, drawn by a single Flea.

THE PLAY AT BAGUE, (or taking a ring,) put in extraordinary action by a Flea.

AN ELEPHANT, of an extraordinary size, bearing upon his back the obelisk of the Luxor, four million times larger than itself, drawn by a single Flea.



LOUIS PHILIPPE, KING OF FRANCE, AND THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, DON MIGUEL, AND THE DEY OF ALGERIIS, mounted on horseback upon Fleas, completely harnessed with saddles and bridles in gold, as horses generally are.

A GOLDEN WAGON, drawn by one Flea only.

The delicacy and precision with which these little objects are executed, and also the necessary difficulty which has been met with, for the instruction and dressing of these little insects, surpasses all the ideas which can be formed.

YOU MUST SEE TO BELIEVE!

The persons who doubt the reality and merit of this Exhibition, have no occasion to pay till they have been convinced the handbill is without exaggeration. You can see these little objects distinctly work, without having recourse to any Microscope.

Open Friday, July 10, from 10 o'clock A. M. till 10 P. M.
Admittance 25 cents. Children half price.

HONER & PALMER, PRINTERS.

1835-0039-C2

"Learned and Industrious Fleas" Exhibit, 1835, item 1835-0039-C2. Handbill submitted to City Council as part of permit application for Flea Circus Exhibit on Washington St., 1835. City Council Proceedings 1822-2000 (Collection # 0100.001), [City of Boston Archives](http://CityofBostonArchives)