**File Organization Tips: Suggestions for Managing Files and Folders.**

There are a lot of advantages to storing documents electronically. In order to experience all the benefits of using electronic files, you will need to have a strategy for managing files and folders. This article will provide some tips that may help with this task.

1. **Use the My Documents folder.** It will be easier to find files if they are all stored in a central location. Try to avoid saving files on the desktop or in program folders.
2. **Use a consistent method for naming folders.** It is important that you develop a naming system for the kinds of folders that you use and that you stick to this system. Use the rename function (right click on folder) to modify folder names when appropriate**.**
3. **Build a layered folder structure.** Considerusing folders within folders so that you have multiple layers of folders. This will make it easier to find files.
4. **Separate completed work from ongoing projects.** Consider using folders to sort files by date. For example you could have a sub-folder for each fiscal year.
5. **Use shortcuts instead of storing files in multiple locations.** Right click on a file or folder and then click create shortcut. Select shortcut, then cut and paste the shortcut into an easily accessed locations such as the desktop**.** This will make it easier to locate files and folders that you use frequently.
6. **Use descriptive file names.** 
   1. Try to use highly descriptive words in file names. A longer, more descriptive file name can help avoid confusion.
   2. For long file names you may want to use abbreviations.
   3. If you include ID numbers, account codes, and dates in your file names it will be easier to use the search function to find files.
   4. Note in the file name when a document is a draft.
   5. Consider adding a version number to documents that will be revised multiple times.
   6. Use the rename function (right click on file) to modify file names when needed**.**
   7. Try to avoid giving files similar names as this will result in having to open multiple files to find the correct one.
7. **Delete or archive unused files and folders.** When files and folders are no longer used they should be archived or deleted.
8. **Back up files regularly.** Use software to back up files or establish a regular schedule for backing up your files. Back up onto a network drive or an external drive.