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Save Time
by Organizing Your E-mail Messages

Does your e-mail inbox frequently get too full? Do you find it difficult to sort through all of your messages to find the message that you need? If you answered yes, you've probably got clutter in your inbox.

We all know that clutter on a desk or in a file drawer can slow you down and make it hard to find what you need. Clutter in your inbox can have the same effect! Take charge now to keep your inbox organized. These organizing tips can help:

- When you read an e-mail message that you don't need to keep, reply immediately (if a reply is necessary) and delete the message when you're done. That way, you won't have to spend time reading it again later to determine if you can delete it or not.

- Create file folders within your e-mail program for storing messages. If you need to keep messages about a topic or project, create a file folder for that topic. Move all related messages from the inbox to that folder. When you get new messages related to the topic, move them immediately to the folder — the first time you read the messages. The messages will be easy to find.

- Read through all of the messages in your inbox at the end of each week. You can delete the messages that you no longer need, move to folders those that you need to keep, and remember to act on any messages that still need action. Pencil this activity into your planner for a month or two, until it becomes a habit.

Follow these steps for organizing your e-mail messages, and you'll be able to quickly and easily find your messages when you need them!

If you'd like to share an organizing tip that works for you, please e-mail Laura Maus: laura.maus @hamilton-co.org

The Organizing Process:

1. Evaluate what is working and what's not.

2. Set SMART goals.

3. Sort and purge.

4. Assign everything a home.

5. Use the system.

6. Evaluate the system.

7. Continuously improve the system.