

The Office of Project and Sector Studies is responsible for responding to the research needs of the other Divisions in the Department. Analyses of specific aspects of the State economy are conducted, the approach being primarily micro in character. The purpose of these studies is to provide a quantitative and rational basis for industrial and community development planning.

The Office of Statistical Information is responsible for all technical information gathering. It provides an information center for economic and statistical data and serves as the contact point between the State and the sources of such data, which include the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Federal Reserve Districts, trade associations, non-profit organizations, and various State and local organizations. This Office converts basic information into specific materials pertinent to business, industry and the general public.

DIVISION OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The Division of Local and Regional Development was established in July, 1976 to provide more effective management and coordination of the Department's assistance to local governments and regional organizations in their efforts to develop and implement economic development, housing and historical-cultural programs. In cooperation with local officials, the Division also provides training and management systems assistance aimed at strengthening the management capacity of local units of government.

In providing assistance, the Division places primary emphasis on those local or regional programs for which the Department can deliver specific resources and/or on programs for which the Department is capable of obtaining or coordinating use of related State and Federal resources.

The Division helps local and regional officials identify development problems or issues, assess alternative courses of action,

design specific action programs, and obtain Department, other State, and Federal resources useful in implementing development programs.

As a clearinghouse for Departmental services to sub-State units of government, the Division coordinates State and local involvement with a number of Federal programs related to economic development, housing and historical-cultural matters.

The Division administers Maryland's Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) development program and grant process to ensure full use of available ARC resources designed to stimulate economic and community development projects and activities in Western Maryland.

To facilitate liaison with the three western counties of the State, the Division maintains the Department's Western Maryland Regional Development Office in Hagerstown.

The Division undertakes responsibilities for the Department as the designated State agency for coordination of Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs in Maryland through assistance aimed at implementation of an Economic Development Planning Program. It coordinates the submission of development projects for funding by EDA.

The Division also carries out responsibilities for the Department as the Governor's designated State liaison agency with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for implementation of the Federal Community Development Block Grant Program in Maryland. Direct technical assistance is provided to local governments and regional organizations to help them develop program plans and applications for Block Grant funds. In addition, the Division assists local governments in obtaining Departmental housing-related resources to complement local programs using Federal Block Grant funds.

The Division serves as the Department's liaison with the U. S. Department of Agriculture rural housing and development programs which provide resources relevant to Maryland's local and regional development activities.