

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN MARYLAND

Since the nineteenth century, most Maryland counties have been governed by County Commissioners. Today, with a Board of County Commissioners serving executive and legislative functions, twelve counties continue this form: Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, and Washington.

In recent decades the citizens of several counties have adopted alternative modes of government. Eight counties, Montgomery (in 1948), Baltimore (in 1956), Anne Arundel and Wicomico (in 1964), Howard (in 1968), Prince George's (in 1970), Harford (in 1972), and Talbot (in 1973) have adopted charter governments with special departments and officers that perform functions formerly exercised by the Board of County Commissioners. Three additional counties, Kent in 1970, Allegany in 1974, and Worcester in 1976, have adopted the optional powers of home rule as provided in Article XIF of the Constitution and Article 25B of the 1957 Code. For provisions relating to the counties that do not fall into these categories, see Article 25 of the Code as amended. Even in these counties, however, most of the traditional offices remain, and though many of them are not regulated by charter they work side by side with the new departments (Const. 1867, Art. XIA; Code 1957, Art. 25A, as amended). For this reason the officers of all counties, regardless of the type of county government, are listed according to function rather than according to the legal or administrative relationships their charters have created.

### METHODS OF APPOINTMENT

#### JUDICIAL OFFICERS

*Circuit Court Resident Judges:* Elected by the voters of the First, Second, and Eighth Judicial Circuits and in other circuits by the voters of the county for fifteen-year terms (Const. 1867, Art. IV, secs. 19-26; Courts Art., secs. 1-501 through 1-503).

*Circuit Court Clerks:* Elected by the voters of the county for four-year terms (Const. 1867, Art. IV, sec. 25; Courts Art., secs. 2-201 through 2-206).

*District Court Judges:* Appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate for ten-year terms or until mandatory retirement is reached at the age of seventy. The District Court system replaced the previously existing justices of the peace, county trial magistrates, people's courts, the Municipal Court of Baltimore City, and other courts of limited jurisdiction (Const. 1867, Art. IV, sec. 41-D; Courts Art., secs. 1-601 through 1-605).

*District Court Administrative Clerks:* Appointed by the chief judge of the District Court upon the recommendation of the administrative judge of the District (Const. 1867, Art. IV, sec. 41-F; Courts Art., sec. 2-602).

*District Court County Clerks:* Appointed by the chief judge of the District Court upon the recommendation of the administrative judge of the District (Courts Art., sec. 2-601).

*Orphans' Court Judges:* Elected by the voters of Baltimore City and each county for four-year terms, except in Montgomery and Harford counties where the Circuit Court judges perform that function. The Governor designates the chief judge (Const. 1867, Art. IV, secs. 20, 40; Code 1957, Art. 93).

*Registers of Wills:* Elected by the voters of the county for four-year terms (Const. 1867, Art. IV, sec. 41; Code 1957, Art. 93).

*Sheriffs:* Elected by the voters of the county for four-year terms (Const. 1867, Art. IV, sec. 44; Code 1957, Art. 87; Courts Art., secs. 2-301 through 2-309).

*State's Attorneys:* Elected by the voters of the county for four-year terms (Const. 1867, Art. V, sec. 7-12).

*District Public Defenders:* Appointed by the Public Defender with the approval of the Board of Trustees of the Public Defender System (Code 1957, Art. 27A, sec. 3).

### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

#### A. CHARTER COUNTIES OF MARYLAND

*County Executives:* Elected by the voters for four-year terms (Const. 1867, Art. XI-A, sec. 3). Of the charter counties, Wicomico and Talbot only have no elected County Executive. The executive