COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The county court served as the administrative unit of county government from the formation of the first colonial Maryland counties until 1798, when the levy court assumed its functions. By 1827, boards of county commissioners began to replace the levy courts. These boards become synonymous with all county government until the mid-twentieth century. Today, with a board of county commissioners serving executive and legislative functions, eleven counties continue this form: Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, and Washington.

Since 1948, the citizens of several counties have used alternative modes of government. Eight counties adopted charter governments: Montgomery (1948), Baltimore (1956), Anne Arundel and Wicomico (1964), Howard (1968), Prince George's (1970), Harford (1972), and Talbot (1973). In these counties special departments, agencies, and officers perform functions formerly exercised by the boards of county commissioners. Four counties—Kent (1970), Allegany (1974), Worcester (1976), and Caroline (1984)—adopted optional powers of home rule as provided by the Constitution (Art. XIF) and the *Annotated Code of Maryland* (Art. 25B). (For provisions relating to the counties that do not fall into these categories *see* Article 25 of the *Code* .) Regardless of the form of government, however, most traditional offices remain, and although many of them are not regulated by charter they work side by side with the new departments (Const. 1867, Art. XI–A; Code 1957, Art. 25A). For this reason officers, boards, and commissions 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.

Baltimore City became a governmental unit, separate from Baltimore County, with the ratification of the State Constitution of 1851. While its original incorporation dates from 1796, the City operates under its current charter of 1964. (For State provisions for Baltimore City government *see* Article XI of the Constitution, as well as the *Annotated Code of Maryland.)*

JUDICIAL OFFICERS

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

Circuit Court Clerk: Elected by the voters of the county for a four-year term (Const. 1867, Art. IV, sec. 25; Code Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, secs. 2–201 through 2–206).

District Court Judge: Appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate for a ten-year term or until mandatory retirement at age 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; Code Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, secs. 1–601 through 1–605).

District Court Administrative Clerk: Appointed by the chief judge of the District Court upon recommendation of the administrative judge of the District (Const. 1867, Art. IV, sec. 41–F; Code Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, sec. 2–602).

District Court County Clerk: Appointed by the chief judge of the District Court upon recommendation of the administrative judge of the District (Code Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, sec. 2–601).

Orphans' Court Judge: Elected by the voters of Baltimore City and each county for a four-year term, except in Montgomery and Harford Counties where Circuit Court judges administer probate. The Governor designates the chief judge (Const. 1867, Art. IV, secs. 20, 40; Code Estates and Trusts Article, secs. 2–101 through 2–109).

Register of Wills: Elected by the voters of the county for a four-year term (Const. 1867, Art. IV, sec. 41; Code Estates and Trusts Article, secs. 2–201 through 2–211).