

The General Assembly created the State Department of Public Welfare by Chapter 99, Acts of 1939 to supersede the Board of State Aid and Charities established by Chapter 679, Acts of 1900. By Chapter 148, Acts of 1967, the General Assembly modernized the law under which the Department operates, bringing it into conformance with practice and clarifying the responsibilities of the State Board, the State Director, the boards of the local departments of public welfare, and the local directors.

The State Department of Public Welfare is the central, coordinating, and directing agency of all welfare activities in the State, including aid to families with dependent children, old age assistance, public assistance to the needy blind, general public assistance, aid to the permanently and totally disabled, child welfare services, and any other welfare activities financed in whole or in part by the State Department of Public Welfare. It has responsibility for the certification of low income families for medical assistance.

In Baltimore City and in each county, there is a local department of public welfare whose directors administer these welfare activities within their respective localities, subject to the supervision, direction, and control of the State Department of Public Welfare. Foster care is one of the services administered by the local departments. The State Department exercises supervision over all public and private institutions which have the care, custody or control of dependent, abandoned or neglected children, except those placed by law under the supervision of another agency.

The Department investigates public and private institutions, organizations, and agencies of a charitable nature in the State, including those which receive part of their income from the State, except those placed by law under the supervision of another State agency. Each year before the General Assembly convenes, the Director reports to the Governor on the activities of the Department and on the condition of all charitable institutions, organizations, and agencies (except hospitals) that receive financial aid from the State, and recommends appropriations which are paid on a per capita basis at the rates and subject to regulations established by the State Board of Public Welfare. In agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, the Department administers the food stamp program, which is available to any locality in Maryland whose government has agreed to provide certain administrative costs (Code 1957, 1964 Repl. Vol., 1967 Supp., Art. 88A, secs. 1, 3, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17).

The Governor designates the Chairman of the Board and appoints its nine members for six-year terms so arranged that three terms expire on June 30 of every second year. The State Board appoints the Director, who appoints the other members of the Department staff, all of which are under the Merit System law. In Baltimore City, the Mayor appoints seven citizens to a welfare commission for staggered six-year terms. The Mayor and the Commissioner of Health serve as ex officio members. In each county, the local governing body appoints the welfare board from lists of names submitted by the State Department, after approval by the State Board, containing twice the number of those to be selected. Until June 30, 1968, each of these boards consists of eight members. After that date, each board will consist of nine members. One of the members