

## INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

Independent agencies are those offices, commissions, boards, departments, and other agencies of State government established by statute as independent units of government. Generally the law establishing an independent agency originates with the Maryland General Assembly, but occasionally an agency is created pursuant to a mandate of the U.S. Congress.

While independent agencies are statutorily distinct from the fourteen principal departments of State government, they may receive budgetary or administrative support from them.

### THE OFFICE ON AGING

Rosalie S. Abrams, *Director on Aging*

Harry F. Walker, *Deputy Director*

301 W. Preston St., Room 1004  
Baltimore 21201 Telephone: 383-5064

The Office on Aging was established by Chapter 261, Acts of 1975, as an independent agency to administer, consolidate, and coordinate statewide programs and activities to meet the needs of older Marylanders. Its predecessor agency was the State Coordinating Commission on the Problems of the Aging created by Chapter 1, Acts of 1959. The name of this agency was changed to the Commission on the Aging by Chapter 595, Acts of 1971. In 1974 the Governor established the Governor's Coordinating Office on Problems of the Aging. The creation of the Office on Aging as a cabinet-level agency resulted in the merger of the Commission on the Aging staff with the Governor's Coordinating Office on Problems of the Aging. The Commission on Aging was reassigned as both an advisory and policy-making board to the Director on Aging.

The Director on Aging is appointed by and responsible to the Governor. The Director's actions are subject to the advice, counsel, or approval of the Commission on Aging.

By Chapter 101, Acts of 1982, the Director on Aging chairs the Interagency Committee on Aging Services to evaluate the service needs of elderly persons in the State, and establish priorities for meeting these needs. The same law authorizes the Director to represent the interests of the elderly by serving as an advocate at all levels of government.

The Office on Aging is divided into two functional areas: the Program area headed by the Deputy Director and the Administration area headed by the Assistant Director.

The Program area has three divisions: Programs Management and Coordination, Planning and Assessment, and Nutrition and Community Services.

The Program Management and Coordination Division is responsible for the senior aides program, the public guardianship program, the life support program, legal services development, transportation, physical fitness, and interprogram coordination.

The Planning and Assessment Division is responsible for program planning and development, establishment of program priorities, and assessment of program results. It also assists in preparing legislation.

The Nutrition and Community Services Division is responsible for overall statewide direction of local administration of aging programs and services. It monitors and gives technical assistance to a network of eighteen area agencies on aging. These local agencies receive grants from the Office on Aging to provide nutrition and community services to older persons in their local areas. Area agencies encompass all counties and Baltimore City. Funding sources for grants include Title III of the federal Older Americans Act, Section 700 of the federal Food and Agriculture Act, and State general funds.

The Program area also includes training and Gateway I, a coordinated statewide activity to facilitate access to programs and services for older persons. A Gateway I project is operated by an agency in each local jurisdiction or area of the State as a single point of contact for older persons seeking services and benefits from public and private agencies.

### GATEWAY I SITES

Allegany County  
Cumberland Senior Citizens' Center  
19 Frederick St.  
Cumberland 21532 Telephone: 724-1141

Anne Arundel County  
Arundel Center North  
101 Crain Highway, N.W.  
Glen Burnie 21061 Telephone: 1-800-492-2499