

*Annual Report of Maryland Citizen Board for Review of Foster Care for Children to General Assembly due Jan. 1.*

*Annual Report of Maryland Commission for Women to Governor & General Assembly.*

*Annual Report of Social Services Administration to Governor & Secretary of Human Resources due prior to regular legislative session.*

*Annual Report of State Advisory Council on Nutrition to Governor.*

*Quarterly Report to Department of Fiscal Services on involvement with initiatives of Office of Children, Youth, & Families.*

*Quarterly Report to Secretary of Personnel on part-time positions.*

*Report to Secretary of Budget & Fiscal Planning & Legislative Auditor on account examinations of private care providers under State contract due periodically.*

*Report to Senate Budget & Taxation Committee & House Appropriations Committee on funds available in excess of original appropriation from Social Services Block Grant.*

*Report of Child Support Enforcement Administration to General Assembly on child support guidelines due Jan. 1, 1993, & at least every four years thereafter.*

*Semi-annual Report to State Treasurer on anticipated debt during next seven-month period due Jan. 1 & July 1.*

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#### ORIGIN & FUNCTIONS

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Created in 1975, the Department of Human Resources serves families and individuals who, due to financial hardship, disability, age, chronic disease, or any other cause, need help in obtaining basic necessities of food and shelter. Children in particular come under the departmental umbrella through programs for day care, foster care, adoption, and protective services that also extend to vulnerable adults. Federally funded programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Food Stamps, and Medicaid are administered by the Department along with State programs for the homeless, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime, and women who are displaced, battered, or assaulted.

Many functions of the Department originally were administered by county government from the colonial period to 1900. State government assumed certain responsibilities in 1900 when Maryland's first State agency of public welfare, the Board of State Aid and Charities, was formed. In the 1930s, State efforts were joined by the federal government.

Although the first settlers were nearly all young and able-bodied, disabling accidents and other disasters deprived some of their means of livelihood. Separated by the ocean from family and kin, such unfortunates had nowhere to turn. As early as 1650, an order of the Assembly authorized a tax levy to provide maintenance for the maimed, lame and blind of St. Mary's County. Yet, since few people applied for assistance, creation of a bureaucracy such as existed under the poor laws in England was considered unnecessary and wasteful, even though several governors recommended it. County governments tried to limit their financial obligations by requiring persons harboring a stranger to post bond that the stranger would not become a charge on the county and also requiring bonds from the parents of bastards for their support.

Predating other child protective agencies by centuries, county courts in 1658 began to protect the welfare and estates of orphan children in probate matters. An orphan was any minor who inherited an estate and whose father had died. The court appointed guardians and oversaw administration of a child's resources until the child came of age. When the estate was insufficient for the child's maintenance, the court bound out the child to learn a trade.

Initially, Maryland's need for labor was such that no able-bodied person lacked work. Acquisition of land and upward mobility was possible for nearly everyone. As available land was taken up, however, economic conditions changed and, prior to the Revolutionary War, fewer opportunities existed for persons without capital and property.

Two methods of poor relief developed in Maryland. The first was to provide direct payment of money for support, a method which began in the colonial period and continues to this day. The second was to house the poor in a county almshouse, later known as the county home.

Direct support payments, later called out-pensions, developed out of the annuities granted by the county courts as early as 1650 to provide for persons too old, too crippled, or too young to work. In some counties, as in England, parish vestries also administered poor relief. After the emergence of almshouses