

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

As reported in the Eighteenth Annual Report, Records Engineering, Inc. made a complete survey of State of Maryland records during fiscal year 1953. The survey covered ninety different State and county agencies and was presented in thirty-five separate reports. As a direct result of the survey, the General Assembly enacted legislation in March 1953, which provided for a State Records Management Program to be administered by the Hall of Records Commission (Chapter 436, Acts of 1953).

On July 1, 1953, the Records Management Division was established within the Hall of Records to carry out the Records Management Program. A letter was sent to all State agencies pointing out the urgent need for immediate attention to records administration in the State and expressing the desire to render every assistance possible to the agencies in solving their records problems. A copy of the law establishing the State Records Program was attached.

The development of forms and methods for the preparation, submission and approval of records retention schedules was undertaken at the beginning of the program. Proposed forms were drafted and tested in several agencies, and it was decided that schedules should be prepared by Records Management Division personnel and submitted to the appropriate agency for acceptance. Procedures were established for routing the completed schedules from the agencies to the Archivist and the Board of Public Works for official approval.

The certificate form for reporting the disposal of records was revised to include data on disposal authority and method of destruction. A follow-up plan was adopted based on a master control card for each major record item scheduled, which will make it possible to determine the degree of compliance.

The Division initiated a series of visits to State agencies to acquaint them with the general program and enlist their cooperation in making it a success. Follow-up visits were made as soon as possible thereafter to assist the agencies in their immediate records problems and the preparation of retention schedules.

Excellent cooperation was received from the agencies on all phases of our work, but the small size of the staff made it impossible to visit all agencies during the first year. Agencies to be visited were selected, therefore, on the basis of paper accumulations or immediate need for assistance. As the program moved forward, many agencies not yet contacted requested by telephone or letter that the Division help in solving critical records problems and such requests were given immediate attention.