

Services] HUMAN RESOURCES as set forth in Article 41 of this Code or elsewhere in the laws of Maryland.

363.

(a) The Office shall maintain liaison with the Federal [Office of Economic Opportunity] COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, county and city commissions on economic opportunity, citizens groups and all other agencies of the State, federal, county and municipal governments and it shall consult with and advise these local groups on their programs on economic opportunity and shall work at all levels of government to administer and implement the Federal HEADSTART, Economic Opportunity AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP Act OF 1974 and program.

(b) The Office shall collect and assemble pertinent information and data available from other departments and agencies of the State and federal governments and shall disseminate information in the interest of economic opportunity programs in this State by publication, advertisement, conferences, workshops, programs, lectures and other means.

(c) The Office may employ professional, technical, clerical, stenographic, and other personnel to carry out its duties and functions within the limits of budgetary appropriations from time to time. The employees of the Office, except the Director and deputy director, shall be subject to the provisions contained in Article 64A of the Code, title "Merit System." Any employee of the Office who is eligible for transfer to the State Merit System, and who has held this position for at least six (6) months, shall be so transferred without further probation, examination, or qualification. An employee transferred to the State Merit System, pursuant to this subsection shall be transferred in the respective job classification under which he is employed at the time of transfer and shall not receive any diminution in compensation and/or respective amounts of accumulated leave or sick leave, solely as a result of this transfer.

(d) In the performance of its duties, the Office is hereby authorized and empowered to make and enter into contracts and to assume such other functions as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this subtitle that are not inconsistent with this or other acts. The Office may make and enter into contracts with other boards, commissions, agencies and institutions of this State, other states and the federal government, upon such terms as may be eventually agreed upon, to have such studies and research activities as may be necessary and proper, and is authorized to pay the cost thereof out of funds which may be appropriated to the Office.

364.