

coordinator shall be the chief administrator of the Energy Assistance and Information Program. The Executive Director of the Maryland Office of Economic Opportunity shall also appoint a deputy coordinator who shall be the principal assistant to the coordinator. Both appointees shall be selected because of their known experience and interest in the development and implementation of economic opportunity programs.] THERE IS AN OFFICE OF HOME ENERGY PROGRAMS IN THE COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.

(b) The exercise of all authority, duties, and functions vested, or to be vested, in the Office [of Energy Assistance and Information or in the coordinator or the deputy coordinator] by the provisions of this subtitle or by any other laws of this State is subject to the authority of the Secretary [of the Department] of Human Resources as set forth in this article or elsewhere in the laws of Maryland.

6-405.

(a) The Office shall maintain liaison with [both] the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, Maryland [and the federal offices of economic opportunity,] county and city offices concerned with energy programs, citizen groups, and all other agencies of the State, federal, county, and municipal governments [and it]. THE OFFICE shall consult with and advise these local groups on their energy assistance programs and shall work at all levels of government to administer and implement the [State] Energy Assistance [and Information] Program Act. In addition, the Office shall establish liaison with all utility and major fuel vendors in the State and shall seek their advice when developing and implementing the [energy assistance] 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 energy assistance. The Office shall adopt the following information collection and dissemination procedures:

(1) Identification of all utility vendors and major fuel vendors within the State, followed by efforts to obtain their voluntary cooperation with the energy assistance program.

(2) A State information service that utilizes a toll free telephone number to provide the public with program information and the location of the nearest local energy assistance office.

(3) A mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of the energy assistance program to determine if eligible households are aware of and have access to the local program offices.

(c) (1) 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].

(2) Except as otherwise provided by law, the employees of the ENERGY ASSISTANCE Program shall be subject to the provisions of the State Personnel and Pensions Article.