

each major region of the State to serve as a small business extension service contractor.

(2) One contractor shall be retained within each of the following regions:

(i) Western: Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, and Carroll counties;

(ii) Central: Howard and Baltimore counties and Baltimore City;

(iii) Southern: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties;

(iv) Eastern: Harford, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester counties; and

(v) Suburban Washington: Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

(3) Each contractor shall utilize the expertise of successful business persons, educational institutions, public officials, the Federal Small Business Administration, and other private or public resources to provide extension services to small businesses within the designated region.

(4) The Department shall coordinate with the contractors for each designated area to effectuate the purposes of this subtitle.

(b) (1) The Secretary shall appoint a panel of 11 members to advise the Secretary on the criteria and selection of contractors.

(2) The panel shall consist of the following representatives and represent all regions under subsection (a) of this section:

(i) [A designee] 3 REPRESENTATIVES of the Department;

[(ii)] 2 representatives of the Department of Economic and Community Development Advisory Commission;

[(iii)] (II) 1 representative from the Maryland Chamber of Commerce who owns a small business, as defined under this [subheading] SUBTITLE;

[(iv)] (III) 1 representative of the National Federation of Independent Business, who shall reside in Maryland and who shall be employed by, or own, a small business;