

(e) (1) The Secretary shall appoint a board of 17 members to advise the Secretary.

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

(i) 3 representatives of the Department;

(ii) 1 representative from the Maryland Chamber of Commerce who owns a small business, as defined under this subtitle;

(iii) 1 representative of the National Federation of Independent Business, who shall reside in Maryland and who shall own a small business;

(iv) 1 representative of the federal Small Business Administration;

(v) 1 representative from a local chamber of commerce in each region, who owns a small business;

(vi) 3 owners of small businesses from the State at large who shall reside in Maryland; and

(vii) 2 representatives of local government.

(3) The Secretary shall designate a chairperson from among the members.

(4) The advisory board shall:

(i) Identify issues and concerns of small businesses;

(ii) Advise the Department AND THE COMMISSION on problems affecting small businesses;

(iii) Serve as a general advocate for small businesses; and

(iv) Review the progress and effectiveness of each center's program and make recommendations on the criteria and selection of contractors.

(5) Each member of the advisory board shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations.

(f) The Department shall provide assistance to small businesses, including:

(1) Operation of an information exchange covering current and new technical information and data concerning business investment and marketing trends in this State, management techniques, technological assistance, administrative methods, production techniques, product developments, federal and State legislation and regulations affecting small business, and any other news or information helpful to small businesses; and