MEMORANDUM

June 15, 1984

TO: County Council

FROM: Andrew Mansinne, Jr., Director, Office of Legislative Oversight

SUBJECT: Office of Legislative Oversight Memorandum Report: Management and Control Over County Government Forms

PURPOSE. To provide the County Council with a report on the volume of forms currently and regularly used in accomplishing the programs and functions of County Government, a description of the County Government's forms management program and a description of central forms programs in Federal, State and other local governments.


INVENTORY OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT FORMS

1. General. The Office of Legislative Oversight requested information from 40 County Government departments (including offices and commissions) on the forms currently and regularly used in the course of carrying out their programs and functions. For the purpose of this inventory a form was defined as any pre-printed document with blank spaces for information to be filled in. The form could be for public distribution, for program purposes or for internal administrative purposes. Finally, forms which were designed and produced by one department to be completed by other departments were reported only by the originating department.

2. Result of the Survey. A total of 38 departments (95%) completed the Forms Inventory Report and submitted one copy of all forms currently being used. Our review of the Forms Inventory Reports showed 3,804 different forms are regularly used by those 38 County Government departments. The majority of these forms are printed by the Department of Facilities and Services' Print Shop or on an individual department's photocopy machine. The amount of any one particular form used annually ranged from one copy per year (the Office of Management and Budget uses one copy of the Request to Hire Form), to 3,250,000 copies per year (the Department of Facilities and Services uses 3,250,000 copies of the Postage Charge Designation Form). The total annual cost for producing these forms
could not be determined because departments did not consistently submit cost figures. At Exhibit A is an overview of the 38 County Government departments showing the number of different types of forms and the range of the amount used annually.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT'S FORMS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

1. General. Basically, the County Government has no centralized forms management program. Each department produces and processes its own forms as needed to accomplish its individual programs and functions. Although, there are no specific standards, policies or procedures to assure effective and efficient use of forms, there are several separate and distinct functions that could be combined to implement a centralized forms management program. These functions are identified and discussed in the following paragraphs.

2. Department of Facilities and Services. Administrative Procedure 6-3, Records Management, dated July 1975, and the Addendum to AP 6-3, Records Management (Manual), dated September 1975, provide the guidelines for a Records Management System within the County government. These procedures are modeled after the Maryland State Records Management Manual and require the Records Management Section of the Department of Facilities and Services, to administer the County's Record Management System. The current emphasis of this system as outlined in the procedures has been on retention and disposal of County records and not on control over forms.

Although, Administrative Procedure 6-3, does not specifically address forms management, OLO's discussion with Record Management Section staff indicated a knowledge of, and a willingness to develop a forms management program.

3. Office of Information and Volunteer Services. The Publications and Graphics Section of the Office of Information and Volunteer Services began a project in FY 82 to redesign County forms to make them graphically clear and written in plain language. As individual departments request new or revised forms, the Publications and Graphics Section's staff review the forms to assure that they are graphically clear. By the end of FY 83, 51 forms had been redesigned and at least another 10 will be redesigned by the end of FY 84.

4. Personnel Office. The Training Unit of the Personnel Office contracted with a training consultant in the area of records management and during FY 84 offered two one-day workshops for all employees whose work requires them to maintain a record system or who are responsible for office filing. The emphasis of these workshops was on office records and not control over forms.

5. Office of Management and Budget. The Office of Management and Budget examined information management as an experimental strategic planning project. Since the Office of Legislative Oversight had just requested information from all departments on the forms currently and regularly used in the course of carrying out its programs and functions, the information collected by OLO was reviewed by OMB as part of this
information management project. The final report, Information Management
the Government, dated February 1984, described the County's current
information management program as "...information resources are widely
dispersed; those which are not part of an automated system are subject to
virtually no systematic control or coordination...." Although the report
recommended policies which might govern a changed information management
program, it concluded that ultimately the highest management level must
decide which policies should be implemented to achieve an information
management program in the County government.

SURVEY OF CENTRAL FORMS PROGRAMS IN FEDERAL, STATE AND OTHER LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS.

1. General. Careful preservation of public records is vital to the
effective functioning of government operations and essential to the
continuity of a governmental entity. At the federal and state levels
there are statutory provisions covering records management and archives.
Forms management is one element of a total records management program.

Virtually every government department uses forms. A large number of
employees at various levels within the government have a well identified
stake in some phase of forms management. There are officials who
originate the forms, staff who design and print forms, staff who read,
analyze and act on the data recorded on the forms, and clerks who file the
forms. Centralized forms management is needed to assure cooperation and
coordination at all levels.

Additionally, centralized forms management assures that procedures
and design standards are established to prevent the common defects in
forms, such as: unclear or incomplete instructions for filling in the
form, duplicate or overlapping information among different forms and
obsolete forms because too many were produced. When forms are reviewed
and eliminated or combined, not only are cost savings achieved in
printing, but also in processing, filing and storing. Studies have shown
that processing costs (all the steps from initial fill in through
translating the data), on the average, are 20 times greater than printing
costs and filing costs are about 2-1/2 times the printing and paper
costs.1

Act in 1950 to establish control over the creation of records. This
statute requires the head of each agency to use the regulations and Record
Management Handbooks developed by the National Archives and Records
Service of the General Services Administration. These handbooks (although
published in the 1960s are still current) describe the specific
responsibilities of forms management, forms analysis and forms design.
The handbook, Forms Management, describes the following actions as basic
to a forms management program:

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   Services Administration, 1969.
Establish and maintain an inventory of all forms.

Assign all forms a number and an edition date.

Analyze and review all forms inventoried and all future forms to determine the necessity for the form, the adequacy of design, the compatibility of quantity requested with requirements and the acceptability of the distribution plan.

Require each form to be supported by a directive setting forth instructions for its preparation, submission and use.

3. The State of Maryland. The Hall of Records Commission was created in 1935 with authority to appoint an archivist to manage the Hall of Records and to preserve and repair records, documents and archives. In 1953, the General Assembly initiated a program of records management for all State agencies. The Records Management Division, formerly the Hall of Records Commission, is located in the Department of General Services and has developed a Records Management Manual to outline standard policies and procedures for the management, retention and disposal of public records.

4. Prince George's County, Maryland. The Chief, Administrative Services Division, is designated the Records Management Officer in Prince George's County. The County's Record Management Manual is modeled after the Maryland State Records Management Manual and outlines similar standards, policies and procedures for the management, retention and disposal of public records. Additionally, Prince George's County has established a specific Forms Management Program which includes a Forms Manager position and an index of all authorized County forms.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In response to the Office of Legislative Oversight's request, 95% of the County Government departments reported that 3,804 different forms were currently and regularly used in the course of carrying out their programs and functions. From the data that was reported, OLO was not able to determine the total costs associated with preparing and printing the forms.

2. The County Government does not have a centralized forms management program, although there are several separate and distinct functions that could be combined to implement a program with specific standards, policies and procedures to assure the effective and efficient use of forms.

3. A survey of the Federal, State and other local governments revealed that there are ample examples of forms management programs and handbooks which describe the specific responsibilities of forms management, forms analysis and forms design.

4. One of the first actions that should be taken to implement a forms management program, is to establish and maintain an inventory of all forms. The Forms Inventory Reports that were submitted to the Office of Legislative Oversight represent a major contribution toward establishing an inventory of all County Government forms.
RECOMMENDATION

The Administration should initiate a program to analyze the need for a forms management program and use the Forms Inventory Reports submitted to the Office of Legislative Oversight as a starting point for implementing a forms management program. To this end, the Office of Legislative Oversight will forward the Forms Inventory Reports and all form samples which were collected to the Office of Management and Budget.

AM:csb

Attachments:

EXHIBIT A Overview of Forms Currently and Regularly Used by 38 County Government Departments (as of September 1983).

cc: Chief Administrative Officer
   Director, Bethesda Community Center
   Director, Silver Spring Community Center
   Director, Wheaton Community Center
   Director, Department of Animal Control & Humane Treatment
   Director, Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation
   Director, Department of Environmental Protection
   Director, Department of Facilities and Services
   Director, Department of Family Resources
   Director, Department of Finance
   Director, Department of Fire/Rescue Services
   Director, Department of Health
   Director, Department of Health Systems Planning
   Director, Department of Housing & Community Development
   Director, Department of Liquor Control
   Director, Department of Police
   Director, Department of Public Libraries
   Director, Department of Recreation
   Director, Department of Social Services
   Director, Department of Transportation
   County Attorney
   Director, Office of Consumer Affairs
   Director, Office of Economic Development
   Director, Office of the Hearing Examiner
   Director, Office of Landlord/Tenant Affairs
   Director, Office of Management and Budget
   Director, Public Information & Volunteer Services
   Director, Office of Personnel
   Director, Office of Public Advocate
   Director, Office of State Affairs
   Chairman, Fire/Rescue Commission
   Executive Secretary, Human Relations Commission
   Executive Director, Commission for Women
   Chairman, Board of Appeals
   Director, Interagency Coordinator for CUEF&S
   Chairman, Board of License Commissioners
   Executive Secretary, Merit System Protection Board
Election Administrator, Supervisor of Elections
Chairman, Ethics Commission
District Program Coordinator, Soil Conservation District
Robert Kendal, Assistant Chief Administrative Office
Arthur Spengler, Council Staff Director
## Overview of Forms Currently and Regularly Used by 38 County Government Departments
(as of September 1983)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number of Different Types of Forms</th>
<th>Range of Amount Used Annually Smallest--Largest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Control &amp; Humane Treatment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10--600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Appeals</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Data was not provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commission for Women</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5--3,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Service Centers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30--500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Affairs</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5--22,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrections &amp; Rehabilitation</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>5--25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Attorney</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Data was not provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Council Office</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12--1,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co. Ex./Chief Admin. Officer</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12--7,000</td>
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<td>Environmental Protection</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>3--50,000</td>
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<td>Ethics Commission</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>300--1,200</td>
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<td>Facilities and Services</td>
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<td>12--3,250,000</td>
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<td>Family Resources</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
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<td>2--200,000</td>
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<td>Fire/Rescue Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire/Rescue Services</td>
<td>152</td>
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<td>Health Systems Planning</td>
<td>737</td>
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<td>Hearing Examiner</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>----700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; Community Development</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8--500</td>
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<td>Human Relations Commission</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td>Interagency Coordinator for CUEFS</td>
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<td>75--40,000</td>
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<td>Landlord/Tenant Affairs</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Legislative Oversight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liquor Control</td>
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<td>1--200,000</td>
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<td>Management and Budget</td>
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<td>Merit System Protection Board</td>
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<td>Personnel</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>Police</td>
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<td>50--1,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Advocate</td>
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<td>Public Information &amp; Volunteer Services</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20--2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Libraries</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1--200,000</td>
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<td>Recreation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50--30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
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<td>Data was not provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soil Conservation District</td>
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<td>50--1,200</td>
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<td>State Affairs</td>
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<td>50--1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>1--60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,804</td>
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EXHIBIT A