Montgomery County Government

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.

AUTHORITY. Council Resolution 9-2040, subject: FY 83 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight, adopted November 16, 1983.

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. <u>General</u>. 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. <u>Department of Facilities and Services</u>. Administrative Procedure 6-3, <u>Records Management, dated July 1975</u>, and the Addendum to AP 6-3, <u>Records Management (Manual)</u>, 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. <u>Office of Information and Volunteer Services</u>. 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. <u>Personnel Office</u>. 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. <u>Office of Management and Budget</u>. 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

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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]

2. The Federal Government. Congress enacted the Federal Records Act in 1950 to establish control over the creation of records. This statue 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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1.   Records Management Handbook, Forms Management p. 25 & 27, General 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)

Department	Number of Different Types of Forms	Range of Amount Used Annually Smallest--Largest	
Animal Control & Humane Treatment	16	10	600
Board of Appeals	8	Data was not provided	
Commission for Women	60	5	3,500
Community Service Centers	11	30	500
Consumer Affairs	58	5	22,000
Corrections & Rehabilitation	297	5	25,000
County Attorney	0		
County Council Office	23	12	1,500
Co. Ex./Chief Admin. Officer	12	1	1,000
Economic Development	43	12	7,000
Environmental Protection	166	3	50,000
Ethics Commission	3	300	1,200
Facilities and Services	51	12	3,250,000
Family Resources	26	10	12,000
Finance	218	2	200,000
Fire/Rescue Commission	18	Data was not provided	
Fire/Rescue Services	152	25	20,000
Health	737	2	52,000
Health Systems Planning	1	--	700
Hearing Examiner	14	8	300
Housing & Community Development	2	--	500
Human Relations Commission	55	Data was not provided	
Interagency Coordinator for CUEFS	7	75	40,000
Landlord/Tenant Affairs	15	50	12,000
Legislative Oversight	0		
Liquor Control	55	1	200,000
Management and Budget	206	1	300,000
Merit System Protection Board	0		
Personnel	76	25	60,000
Police	415	50	1,500,000
Public Advocate	0		
Public Information & Volunteer Services	28	20	2,000
Public Libraries	98	1	200,000
Recreation	40	50	30,000
Social Services	322	Data was not provided	
Soil Conservation District	8	50	1,200
State Affairs	5	50	1,000
Transportation	558	1	60,000
TOTAL	3,804		

EXHIBIT A