

Article - Agriculture

§8-203.

(a) The Committee may employ any administrative officer, technical experts, and other permanent or temporary employees that it requires and shall determine their qualifications and duties.

(b) The Committee may call upon the Attorney General for legal services it requires.

(c) As authorized by the annual State budget, the Committee may employ clerical, administrative, or technical employees to be assigned to soil conservation districts organized under this title to assist the district boards of supervisors in carrying out the conservation program authorized under this title. This subsection does not authorize the hiring of employees to assist in the operation of equipment or similar optional activities for which a charge is made by the district, other than demonstration type projects approved by the Committee.

(d) The Committee may cooperate with local governments in providing soil conservation districts with personnel, space, and other items or assistance to aid the district in carrying out the soil and water conservation program authorized under this title. The Committee may accept from local governments, financial or other aid to supplement State funds allocated to provide personnel, space, and other items for soil conservation districts. The Committee may spend public funds of the State, appropriated for administration of this title, to pay the State share of costs of the cooperative program as may be agreed on by the Committee and the county government.

(e) (1) The district clerical and administrative employees supported by State funds on July 1, 1978, on application by the district, shall become eligible for appointment under the State Personnel Management System as classified service employees of the State Soil Conservation Committee to be assigned to districts as provided in this subsection. The Committee may employ part-time classified personnel for these positions if full funding is not available from State or local sources, or both.

(2) (i) Any soil conservation district, with concurrence of the State Soil Conservation Committee and on application to the Secretary of Personnel before July 1, 1979, may have all of its clerical and administrative employees who are currently supported by State funds and who were employed on June 30, 1978, and who are otherwise eligible, appointed under the State Personnel Management System as classified service employees of the State Soil Conservation Committee assigned to the district.

(ii) Any employee appointed to the classified service under this paragraph (2) shall be appointed without further examination or qualification. Each employee shall be placed in the classification that is comparable to, or most closely compares with, the employee's former position in duties and responsibilities.

(iii) Employees appointed to the classified service under this paragraph (2) may not suffer a diminution of salary or wages, accrued paid leave whether earned or granted, or seniority rights. Any increase in salary or wages granted after December 31, 1977, may be retained upon appointment to the classified service only if approved by the Secretary of Personnel.

(iv) For all employees appointed to the classified service under this paragraph (2), the Secretary of Personnel shall consider the monetary value of any and all other benefits, entitlements, services, or prerogatives and, at the Secretary's discretion and in consideration of the best interests of the classified service, may take such values or any portion thereof into consideration when establishing the rate of salary upon appointment. Once the rate of salary has been established upon appointment, the employee shall be entitled to the same benefits provided to classified service employees under Division I of the State Personnel and Pensions Article. Funding for these positions may be on a cost-sharing arrangement with local governments.

(3) (i) Personnel who are employed on or after July 1, 1978, or who have been employed for fewer than 6 months on the date of application by the district will be appointed to the skilled service or professional service, with the exception of special appointments, on completion of 6 months of satisfactory employment with the district, and in conformity with the provisions of this subsection.

(ii) Clerical and administrative personnel appointed after the date of application by the district shall be appointed in conformity with the provisions of the State Personnel and Pensions Article that govern the skilled service or professional service, with the exception of special appointments.

(4) (i) An employee who has been included in the skilled service or professional service under this subsection shall become a member of the Employees' Retirement System of the State of Maryland with service credit beginning on the date the employee is covered in the skilled service or professional service.

(ii) If the member's compensation is paid wholly or partly from funds other than State funds, the employer's cost of Social Security and retirement contributions shall also be proportionately paid from the other funds.

(5) (i) Employees appointed effective July 1, 1978, under paragraph (2) of this subsection shall be given a January increment date and shall receive their first increment on January 1, 1979.

(ii) Employees appointed after July 1, 1978, shall receive an increment as if the appointment date were the entry on duty date.