

impossible. Third, they have afforded us an opportunity to determine accurately the rate of reference to records, which has resulted in the reduction of previously established retention periods for many records series. Finally, they have provided a much less costly means than microfilming of coping with great volumes of records.

In addition to our responsibility for the orderly retirement of records, and their care while not in current use, the legislation establishing the program made it the duty of the Hall of Records to inspect the records management practices of all State agencies and to review proposals for the purchase or rental of record equipment, storage space, and services, including the microfilming and photocopying of records. In the discharge of these duties, some progress has been made in controlling the creation of records and in improving their management while in current use.

This aspect of our work has been accomplished in several ways. In some instances, the creation of certain records and the unnecessary duplication of others were eliminated as the result of recommendations made during the work incidental to establishing records control schedules. Suggested improvements were also made when poor filing practices, improper use of equipment, or inadequate labeling of files were observed. In other instances, agencies have asked our advice and assistance in the solution of specific records problems or have asked us to make a comprehensive study of their records and office procedures. These requests are increasing because it has become more and more difficult for most agencies to carry on their expanding activities without improved procedures and better utilization of the space allotted them.

Often, in the larger agencies, proposed changes may be developed from studies conducted within the agency by agency personnel or by outside consultants. In such cases, we frequently are asked to participate in the studies or to review the proposals after they are completed. If not, and the proposals involve the expenditure of budgeted funds for records equipment or services, we may be asked by the Department of Budget and Procurement to review the proposal, either at the time funds for it are requested or before they are expended. Although the progress made thus far in these areas has been gratifying, control of the creation of records and their management while in current use are expected to become increasingly important in our program.

Since the beginning of the program, we have also served as adviser to the Comptroller of the Treasury on the expenditure of funds for record equipment and services by the Clerks of Court and the Registers of Wills in the counties. Although these officials operate on a county basis, in fiscal matters they are State officers. They must account to the