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**OUR MISSION** is to bring together citizens, community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to collectively address the needs of rural Maryland.

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**OUR VISION** is a future where all of Rural Maryland is prosperous with thriving resources, vibrant economies, and healthy connected communities.

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### **OUR GOALS**

- Encourage healthy, connected communities throughout Rural Maryland through convening of stakeholders, education, public relations and advocacy
- Support the development and growth of vibrant economies in Rural Maryland
- Foster stewardship of Maryland's natural resources
- Maximize RMC outreach, resources and mission through financial and organizational development



## Background

- In 1994, the Rural Maryland Council was initiated by the Governor as the Maryland Rural Development Council (Executive Order 01.01.1994.14) and codified by statute in 1995 (Economic Development Article, Sec. 13-401)
- Independent State Agency housed under the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

- Funded under the State's Operating Budget

### FY2024

- Council (Operating) funded at \$750,000
  - Grant programs funded at \$8,414,679 and an additional \$300,000 for a Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Pilot Program (Health and Human Services Transportation). .
  - Operates under the direction of a 40-member Executive Board in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner.
  - The Council serves as the State's federally designated rural development council and functions as the voice of rural Maryland.
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## ***Why We Work***

### **Challenges in Rural Maryland:**

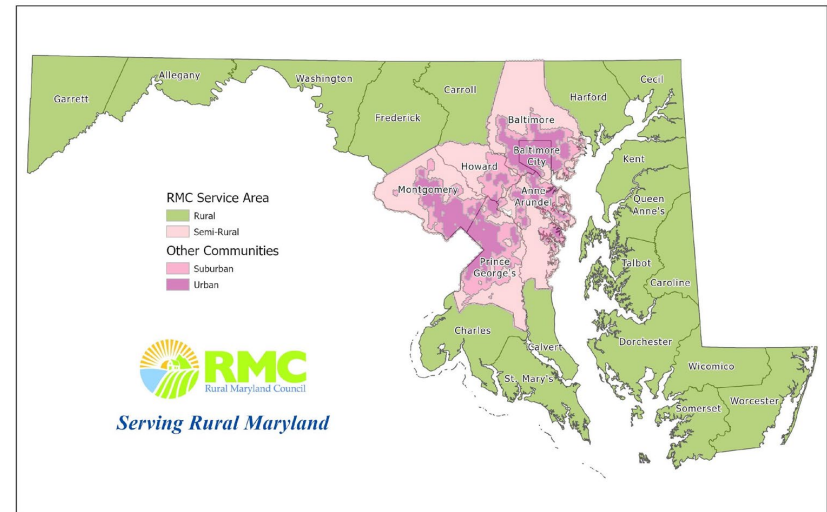
- Highest unemployment rates in the State
- Highest rates of poverty in the State
- Lack of access to transportation service
- Lack of access to health care
- Pressure on the agriculture economy
- Lack of internet and broadband

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## ***Where We Work***

### **Service Territory**

State statute designates the following 18 counties as rural, Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester.



# How We Work

## Education

- Neutral Convener-Issue Focused (Rural Summit, Roundtables, Forums)

## Legislation

- Advocate & Educate-policy development, community engagement-connecting people to their government.

## Grant Programs

- Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF)
- Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)

**Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Priorities**

The rural areas of the state continue to struggle to recover economically as reflected in unemployment and poverty rates.



- Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund**
  - \$9,000,000
  - Supports entrepreneurship, infrastructure and health care
- Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund**
  - \$167,000
  - Builds capacity of rural-serving nonprofits
- Rural Maryland Council**
  - \$750,000
  - Supports the Council's staff, grant administration and event planning expenses
- Regional Councils**
  - \$200,000 each for maintaining the current funding of the State's five regional councils at the historic levels
  - Support the Small, Women and Minority-Owned Business Account fund
- MARBIDCO**
  - \$4,235,000 for Core loan and small grant programs, watermen's microloans, local farm food enterprise and WPIEI grants, and livestock/blue catfish processing equipment grants



# MAERDAF Grant Program: Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund

- Created in 2000 to provide financial assistance to rural-serving nonprofit organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development and agricultural and forestry education efforts.

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- Between 2000 and 2024, MAERDAF awarded over \$12 million in grants rural-serving nonprofit organizations.

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- For Fiscal Year 2024, RMC received 98 MAERDAF applications requesting a total of \$3,374,140 in funding. A total of \$969,121 was awarded to 39 organizations.

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- MAERDAF Priority Areas\*

Agriculture & Forestry	Energy	Rural Broadband	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	Community & Economic Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Education</li> <li>• Regional Food System Development</li> <li>• Forest Industry Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Heat Power</li> <li>• Energy Efficiency</li> <li>• Biomass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including Rural Municipal Broadband Expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer Enrichment Programs</li> <li>• Career Technology Centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development</li> <li>• Workforce Development</li> </ul>

*\*The Grant Review Board will give full consideration to any eligible application regardless of the project focus area.*

# MAERDAF Grant Program: Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund



**Eligible Applicants:** 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organizations, Regional Councils and Community Colleges

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**Purpose:** to increase the overall capacity of rural-serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges to meet a multitude of rural development challenges and to help them establish new public/private partnerships for leveraging non-state sources of funding

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- **Must serve 2 or more rural counties or statewide**
- **When:** Projects must be completed between August 1st– June 30th
- **Preference:** Projects that have an equal or greater cash and/or in-kind match.
- **Project must be completed in 1 year.**
- **Maximum Grant Amount:** \$45,000.
- **Fiscal Year 2025 Allotted Grant Funds:** \$868,485

# MAERDAF Grant Program: Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund

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## **Eligible Expenditures:**

- MAERDAF does not generally fund ongoing staff positions due to sustainability. Grant funds may be used to fund staff time associated with completion of the proposed project only.
- Construction and renovation of buildings are eligible expenses. Acquisition of land is not. Please include quotes of expenditures and be shovel-ready.
- The purchase or rental of vehicles are eligible expenses.
- Meals are allowable if the costs are reasonable, and a justification is provided that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants.
- Indirect administrative costs are capped at 10%

## **Ineligible Expenditures:**

- MAERDAF does not generally fund staff salary or wages for employee positions.
- Contributions, donations or subsequent subawards to third parties are ineligible expenses. Gift cards are also ineligible.
- Organized fundraising including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts or bequests, or similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used are ineligible. Advocacy and lobbying activities are also ineligible.



# MAERDAF Grant Projects



**STEAM Onward, Inc., More  
Than Farming Project  
\$13,450**



**Chesapeake Culinary Center, Mobile  
Market Project  
\$20,000**



**Evergreen Heritage Center,  
Appalachian Coal Camp Project  
\$25,000**



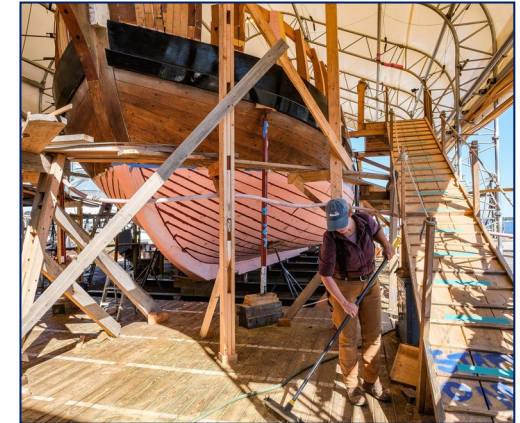
**Chesapeake Housing Mission, Inc.,  
Healthy Homes Initiative -  
\$20,000**



**Adkins  
Arboretum,  
HVAC  
Installation  
\$40,000**



**Preservation Maryland,  
Restoring the Past &  
Building Tomorrow's  
Leaders - \$34,535**



**Chesapeake Bay Maritime  
Museum, Shipwright  
Apprenticeship Program -  
\$34,535**

# Ag programs funded through MAERDAF in FY2024

MPT Maryland Farm and Harvest

Chesapeake Culinary Center

Delmarva Chicken Association

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center

LEAD Maryland

Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation

Maryland Food Bank - Eastern Shore

Around the Bay Farmers Alliance

Future Harvest

# RMPIF Grant Program-Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund

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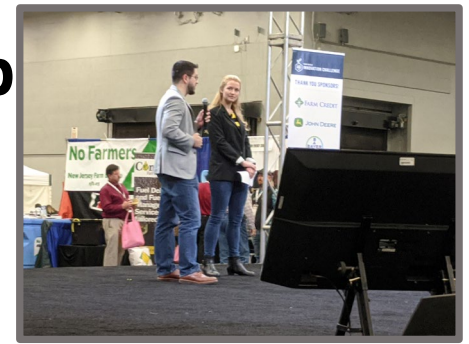


- Authorized by the Maryland General Assembly in 2006.
- Thanks to Governor Moore and the Presiding Officers of the General Assembly, the RMPIF grant program received \$9 million in FY2025.
- **Primary goal** is to provide targeted investments to various regional, nonprofit and educational entities to bring Rural Maryland's standards of living up to statewide averages.
- Priority Areas: Rural Regional Councils; Rural Entrepreneurship Development - Workforce Development, Cooperative Development, and Agricultural Development; Rural Infrastructure; and Rural Health Care.
- For Fiscal Year 2024, RMC received 89 RMPIF applications requesting a total of \$14,389,524 in funding. A total of \$4,745,558 was awarded to 54 organizations.
- **FY2025 Allotted Grant Funds: \$8,250,000**



# RMPIF Guidelines – Rural Entrepreneurship – Agricultural – Workforce – Cooperative Development:

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- **Eligible Applicants:** Applicants must be local government, institute of higher education, regional council, 501(c)(3) IRS tax designation or similar and serve a regional or statewide rural constituency. Community Colleges, Career Technology Centers, Regional Councils and Libraries are eligible applicants.
- **Eligible Projects:** Proposals should be regional (two or more counties) or intergovernmental (meaning two units of government).
- **Match Required:**
  - Must secure a minimum 25% cash match funds from non-state sources.
  - Federal funds are considered matching cash funds.
- **When:** Projects must be completed between August 1st– June 30th
- **Grant Amounts:** No maximum grant amount; \$1,500,000 allotted funds, Grant Review Board will optimally fund 8 entrepreneurial projects.

# RMPIF Guidelines – Rural Entrepreneurship – Agricultural – Workforce – Cooperative Development:

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**Rural Entrepreneurship Development:** to promote entrepreneurship and assist efforts that provide training and technical assistance to the entrepreneurs who can help build prosperous and sustainable rural communities by creating jobs, raising incomes, creating wealth and improving quality of life.

**Rural Agricultural Development:** to support programs and policies that will sustain and enhance agricultural production and agritourism.

**Rural Cooperative Development:** to support programs that improve the economic conditions of rural areas by helping individuals and businesses start, expand, or improve rural cooperatives and other mutually owned businesses.

**Rural Workforce Development:** to support apprenticeships and community colleges so young adults can stay in their rural areas and become part of the rural workforce.

# RMPIF Guideline- Infrastructure

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- **Eligible Applicants:** Applicants must be local government, of higher education, regional council, 501(c)(3) IRS tax designation or similar and serve a regional or rural Community Colleges, Career Technology Centers, Regional Councils and Libraries are eligible applicants.
- **Eligible Projects:** Proposals must be intergovernmental (meaning two units of government).
- **Purpose:** to support projects that involve two or more units of government and are related to broadband, water, wastewater, transportation, workforce housing, and commercial/industrial facilities **up to 25% of the total project costs**. Workforce housing is defined as housing targeted to 80% to 120% of median income of the community in which employees work.
- **When:** Projects must be completed between August 1 – June 30
- **Match Required:**
  - **Must have secured at a minimum 75% matching funds from non-state sources.**
  - Federal funds are considered matching cash funds.
- **Grant Amounts:** No maximum grant amount; \$1,500,000 allotted funds, Grant Review Board will optimally fund 6 to 8 infrastructure projects.

# RMPIF Guidelines – Health Care

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- **Eligible Applicants:** Applicants must be local government, institute of higher education, regional council, 501(c)(3) IRS tax designation or similar and serve a regional or statewide rural constituency. Eligible applicants include federally qualified health centers, area health education centers, local health clinics and other rural-serving health organizations.
- **Eligible Projects:** Proposals should be regional (two or more counties) or intergovernmental (meaning two units of government).
- **When:** Projects must be completed between August 1st– June 30th
- **Grant Amounts:** No maximum grant amount; \$1,500,000 allotted funds for health care projects, in addition to \$300,000 for Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Pilot Program (Health and Human Services Transportation), Grant Review Board will optimally fund up to 10 to 15 health care projects.
- **Match Required:**
  - **Applicants must secure a minimum 50% cash match in funds from non-state sources.**
  - Federal funds are considered matching cash funds.

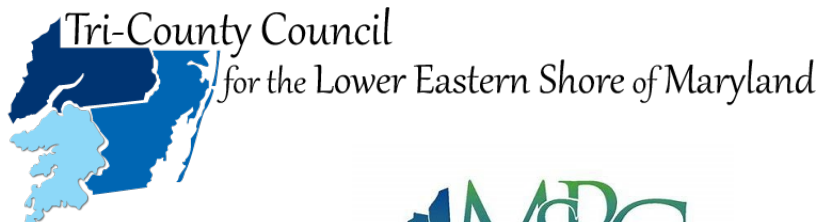
## Focus Areas

- Telehealth
- Improving access to health and medical/dental care
- Recruitment and retention of health care providers
- Behavioral and Mental health
- Programs that implement and measure components of the Maryland Rural Health Plan
- Chronic disease prevention and management
- Oral and Dental health

# RMPIF Guidelines – Rural Regional Planning & Development Councils

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- **Eligible Applicants:** Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, Upper Shore Regional Council, Mid-Shore Regional Council, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore, and multicounty efforts serving rural communities in areas not served by the regional councils.
- **Purpose:** to provide grants specifically for projects and activities of the five regional planning and development councils and for other multi-county rural improvement efforts.
- **When:** Projects must be completed between August 1st– June 30th
- **Grant Amounts:** Each regional council is eligible to receive up to \$600,000 in FY2024 for rural regional planning and development assistance, as well as applications received from a multi-county effort (Frederick, Carroll, Harford) in areas not served by an existing regional council.





# RMPIF Grant Projects



**Fair Hill Foundation, Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill - \$50,000**



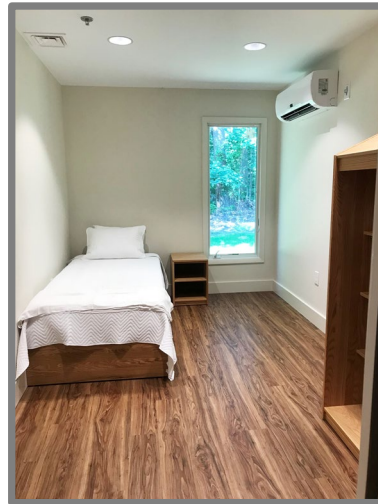
**End Hunger Warehouse Food Distribution Program - \$250,000**



**People For Change Coalition, Summer Enrichment Program - \$70,000**



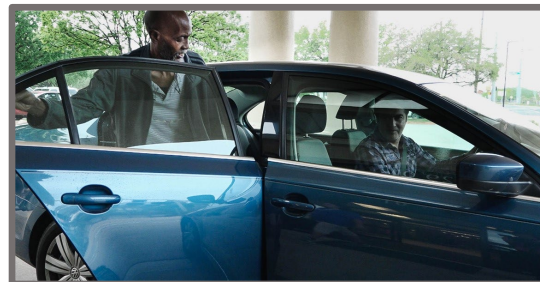
**Sudlersville Volunteer Fire Company, Public Laundromat Facility - \$48,655**



**Channel Marker, Inc., Psychiatric Crisis Bed - \$125,000**



**The Greater Cumberland Committee, ESG Charette - \$175,000**



**Charles Regional Medical Center Foundation – Wheels to Wellness \$26,000**

# Grant Decisions

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- Grant award determinations for both programs are made by the independent MAERDAF Grant Review Board set by law and consisting of the Secretaries (or their designee) of:
  - Department of Agriculture
  - Department of Commerce
  - Department of Health
  - Department of Housing and Community Development
  - Department of Natural Resources
  - Rural Maryland Council Chair (or a designee)
- *Decisions by the MAERDAF Grant Review Board are final and binding*



# Ag Programs funded by RMPIF in FY2024

Ferry Cove Shellfish

True Oyster Restoration

UME Calvert County 4H

Wholesome Harvest Coop

# Grantee Award Requirements

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- Execute grant agreements
- Recordkeeping
  - Interim Report - Due January 31, 2024
  - Final Report - Due July 15, 2024
  - Evidence of Expenditures
  - Acknowledgement of Award and RMC
  - Site Visits
  - Share project photographs
- Managing For Results: RMC is required to submit outcomes to show the direct connection between the grants funded by RMC and the improvement in quality of life within rural communities.
  - Matching Funds Secured
  - # of Jobs Created or Retained
  - # of Loans Made
  - # of Individuals Trained, Served or Reached
  - # of Instructional Hours Delivered
  - # of Services Delivered
  - # of Research Tools Created
  - Amount of Funds Invested in Capital Items

Sample grant agreements and reporting guidelines can be found at [rural.maryland.gov](https://rural.maryland.gov)





# Important Grant Dates

- Grant Process Opened: Monday, April 15, 2024
  - Phase 1: Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline: Friday, May 17, 2024
    - *Grantees will be notified the week of June 2, 2024, on the Phase 1 decision*
  - Phase 2: Full Application Due: Friday, July 12, 2024
  - Awards Announced the week of August 12, 2024
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## Awards

- Grant agreements completed in September/October 2024
- Grant award is forward funded
- 30 to 60 day turn around for check disbursement
- Award Checks mailed October/November 2024

# How to Apply

Click on this icon on the RMC website



- **Online Application Process**

<https://rural.maryland.gov/grant-opportunities/>

- To Start, you will need to ensure you have an account in the Grantee Portal. Please have the following information on hand to create your organization's account:
  - An email address that will act as your username
  - Your contact information
  - Your organizations or fiscal sponsor's information, including the EIN/Tax ID number
  - Your organization's website URL
  - Your organization's Executive Officer's contact information
- Please retain a record of your login information as you will need it in the future to access your in-progress applications and your online application history. Applications can be accessed only via the account in which they were started.

# Upcoming Events

Maryland Day March 25, 2024 at Lawyers Mall in Annapolis

Spring RMC Quarterly Board Meeting, Banneker-Douglass Museum in Annapolis

CyberAg Forum at Cecil College in May 2024 in partnership with TEDCO

# Working Committees

Legislative Committee - meets biweekly during Session

Health Committee - Next meeting February 21, 2024

Rural Housing Committee - Next meeting February 22, 2024

Agriculture Committee - Next meeting mid-March 2024





# Questions?

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## RMC Contacts:

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