Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund
Grant Guidelines and Criteria

Regional Infrastructure Projects

Overview: The objective of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund is to help raise the overall standard of living in rural areas to a level that meets or exceeds statewide benchmark averages by 2030, while preserving the best aspects of a pastoral heritage and rural way of life. Resources provided to the Fund are designed to facilitate significant targeted investments in important economic and community development programs and promote regional and intergovernmental cooperation. These investments will also enable local and regional public and nonprofit organizations to leverage additional non-state financial and human resources to facilitate the realization of sustainable rural development objectives. The Fund will serve the interests of the entire State by:

- encouraging the increase of entrepreneurial activity and commerce and a balanced economy in the State;
- relieving conditions of unemployment and underemployment in rural areas;
- assisting in the retention of valuable farm and forest land for productive use by present and future generations;
- promoting intergovernmental cooperation and public sector/private sector partnerships in and between rural and other areas;
- enhancing the deployment of housing, transportation, water, wastewater, and broadband communications infrastructure and services in rural areas;
- supporting rural commercial center redevelopment and community revitalization efforts; and
- generally promoting the health, happiness, safety, employment opportunity, and general welfare of the residents of each of the rural counties and municipal corporations of the State.

Infrastructure: Infrastructure improvement – from traditional public facilities like roads and sewage treatment plants to such increasingly important amenities as workforce housing – are vital to healthy, flourishing communities. For instance, about half of the State's major sewage treatment facilities and 90 percent of small community waste water systems are located in rural areas, and many of these are experiencing difficult problems associated with aging collection and treatment infrastructure.

Rural regional infrastructure projects would provide matching grants for projects that involve two or more units of local government and are related to broadband, water, wastewater, transportation, workforce housing, and commercial/industrial facilities up to 25 percent of the total project cost. Workforce housing is defined as housing targeted to 80 to 120 percent of median income of the community in which the employees work.

Decisions: Grant award determinations on entrepreneurship, infrastructure and health care applications are made by the independent Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Grant Review Board set by law and consisting of the Secretaries (or their designee) of the Departments of Agriculture, Business and Economic Development (now Commerce), Health and Mental Hygiene, Housing and Community Development and Natural Resources as well as the Chair (or the designee) of the Rural Maryland Council. Decisions by the MAERDAF Grant Review Board are final and binding.

Fiscal Year 2017: For Fiscal Year 2017, the State has budgeted $277,833 in General Funds for the infrastructure portion of the RMPIF program.

Please contact the RMC Executive Director at (410) 841-5772 for any administrative guidance. For more background, see: www.rural.maryland.gov

Application deadline: August 15, 2016
Awards will be announced by: October 14, 2016

Guidelines and Criteria for FY 2017 Infrastructure RMPIF Grant Applications

Eligible Applicants: Applicants must be a local government, institute of higher education, regional council, or be a501(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. The applicant does not have to be located in a rural area or in the area it serves.

For non-profits, applicants must be in "Good Standing" with the State of Maryland. Go to http://sdat.resiusa.org/UCC-Charter/Pages/CharterSearch/default.aspx to find if your organization is in good standing with the State of Maryland. We do not require a copy of the certificate; it is sufficient to provide a screen shot and attach it with your application AS LONG AS IT SHOWS WHETHER THE ENTITY IS CURRENTLY IN GOOD STANDING. An explanation for an entity not in good standing must be included with the application otherwise, the application will be rejected.

Eligible Projects: To be eligible, **proposals must be intergovernmental (meaning two units of government)** and be completed between August 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017.

Rural counties: State-determined rural counties are: Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico and Worcester. Regional projects may include non-rural counties; the majority of service must be provided in rural areas.

Grant Amounts: There is no maximum grant amount designation; however the Board is optimally looking to fund up to four infrastructure projects. Past and current MAERDAF grantees are eligible for a FY 2017 grant if they have met all the requirements of their previous grant agreements, including reporting deadlines.

Eligible Expenditures: The MAERDAF Grant Review Board considers each expenditure as it is detailed in the Application Attachment A.

Salaries and Wages are allowable expenses. It is strongly encouraged to include a statement on sustainability for future years.

Construction and renovation of buildings are eligible expenses. Acquisition of land is not. Permitting costs are eligible expenses.

The purchase or rental of vehicles is an eligible expense. The purchase of equipment is an eligible expense.

Indirect administrative costs are capped at 10%

Ineligible Expenditures: Contributions, donations or subsequent subawards to third parties are ineligible expenses.

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 uses are ineligible.

RMPIF funds are not to supplant existing funding from other sources.

Preferences: Applicants must have secured over 75% matching funds from non-state sources. **A match is required for infrastructure projects.** Federal funds are considered matching funds.

Changes and Unused Funds: Only very minor changes in scope are allowed after a grant has been awarded. Some project timelines can also be modified. Unused grant funds must be returned to the Rural Maryland Council no later than July 13, 2016.

Ranking Criteria: The Grant Review Board uses the following criteria in reviewing applications. Basic Criteria: Applicant meets all basic eligibility requirements – it serves a regional (multi-county) or statewide rural constituency (or is a community college.

Applicant has clearly identified a well substantiated need and developed a Scope of Work that clearly describes specific project activities and how a RMPIF grant will be used.

Specific goals and measurable objectives were clearly stated and appear to be achievable. Goals must be specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable and time-bound. Its Mission Statement is included and lends itself to the activities and goals addressed in the proposal.

The organization has the experience, expertise and resources to deliver on this scope of work. Operational and line-item budgets were included and seem reasonable.

The applicant has significant matching funds of at least 75% of the total project cost from non-state sources.

Other organizations, businesses, agencies and/or other community-based entities have expressed strong support for the organization's work and planned grant activities. Letters of support and other supportive materials (newspapers articles, etc.) were included.

Project/proposal falls under one or more of the following priorities (entrepreneurship, infrastructure or health care) and clearly defines a designated benchmark and outcome associated with the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund.

Grant agreements: Awardees are required to execute a grant agreement. A sample blank grant agreement is included as Attachment A.

Record keeping: Grantees are required to record expenditures and file an interim and final report with the RMC. Reporting guidelines are included as Attachment B.

How to Submit Your Application Packages

A complete RMPIF Application includes:

- A completed application form (download the form by going to http://rural.maryland.gov/maerdaf/)
- A project narrative no more than 5 pages long (as outlined in Section 2 of the Application), and
- Appendix Attachments A through F (as outlined in Section 3 of the Application).

Applications will only be accepted by email.

- Include all required items in ONE Microsoft Word or PDF file, and
- Be sure we receive it by midnight on August 15, 2016. Email your application to: **rmc.mda@maryland.gov.**
- You will receive an acknowledgement that your application has been received. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, contact our office at (410) 841-5772.

Don't let your application be declared ineligible on a technicality:

Applications received after the deadline *will not be accepted* and will be deemed ineligible.

Incomplete or illegible applications will be deemed ineligible. Double check your materials to ensure all attachments are included, all information is clearly written, all budget numbers add up, and all scans are legible.

All applicants will be notified of the status of their application no later than October 14, 2016.

If you have any questions, please contact Charlotte Davis, Executive Director of the Rural Maryland Council at charlotte.davis@maryland.gov or (410) 841-5774.

Thank you for applying to the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund.

Attachment A

GRANT AGREEMENT FOR DISBURSMENT OF FY 2017 RMPIF AWARDS

Grantee Name: «Grantee_POC_Organization»
Address: «Grantee_POC_Address»
Federal ID Number: «Federal_Tax_ID_Number»

Fiscal Contact: «Grantee_POC_First_Name» «Grantee_POC_Middle_Name» «Grantee_POC_Last_Name»«Grantee_POC_Suffix»	**Project Contact: «Project_POC_Courtesy_Title» «Project_POC_First_Name» «Project_POC_Middle_Name» «Project_POC_Last_Name»«Project_POC_Suffix»**
Organization: «Grantee_POC_Organization»	**Organization: «Project_POC_Organization»**
Address: «Grantee_POC_Address»	**Address: «Project_POC_Address»**
City, State Zip: «Grantee_POC_City», «Grantee_POC_State» «Grantee_POC_Zip»	**City, State Zip: «Project_POC_City», «Project_POC_State» «Project_POC_Zip»**
Phone: «Grantee_POC_Phone»	**Phone: «Project_POC_Phone»**
Fax: «Grantee_POC_Fax»	**Fax: «Project_POC_Fax»**
Email: «Grantee_POC_Email»	**Email: «Project_POC_Email»**

The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (the "Fund") provides funding to rural regional planning and economic development organizations, rural entrepreneurship and healthcare programs, institutions of higher education and advanced technology centers at community colleges, as described in State Finance and Procurement Article, Section 2-206 Annotated Code of Maryland (the "Act"). Under the Act, the Rural Maryland Council ("RMC") (the "Grantor") has designated the Maryland Department of Agriculture (the "Administering Agency") to administer the grant with the above named organization. The Administering Agency has designated the following to be its official contact: Karen Fedor, Senior. Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401 or Karen.Fedor@maryland.gov. The following conditions apply.

Grantor and Grantee agree as follows:

The purpose of this Agreement is to provide a grant of «Amount_In_Words» («Amount_Awarded») to Grantee to assist in achieving the overall project and/or programmatic goals set forth in the Grantee's FY 2017 RMPIF Grant Application and referenced in the Scope of Work and Deliverables ("Exhibit 1") attached to this Agreement and incorporated herein. Specifically, these funds are to be used for those Deliverables as outlined in Exhibit 1. Significant changes in the scope of work are not permitted. Minor changes that adhere to the original intent of the grant and maintain the essential integrity of the grant's purpose may be allowed provided the Grantor and the Administering Agency agree that such changes are consistent with the Board's intent.

Performance under this Agreement commences on **September 1, 2016** and continues until agreed upon services are completed, but in any case no later than **June 30, 2017.**

Upon execution of this Agreement and receipt of "Request for Disbursement" ("Exhibit 2"), the Administering Agency will approve **disbursement of 100 percent** of the Grant funds to Grantee.

Reporting: The Grantee shall provide an interim programmatic and financial report no later than **January 25, 2017** to the Administering Agency. The Grantee shall provide a final programmatic and financial report to the Rural Maryland Council and the Administering Agency Representative no later than **July 31, 2017**.

Interim and final reports shall include **original documentation or certification verifying all grant fund expenditures**, to date. Interim reports shall include a forecast of expenses for the remainder of the grant period. Any overpayment or unspent funds shall be returned to the Grantor in conjunction with the final grant report.

Interim and final reports must be submitted by email to both the Rural Maryland Council and Administering Agency in Microsoft Word, PDF and/or Excel document format. Electronic copies may include scans of the documentation required to verify use of grant funds.

By signing this agreement, the Grantee certifies that it:

- Complies with all applicable federal, state, and local law, including laws relating to discrimination in employment;
- Complies with Maryland's policy concerning drug and alcohol free work places, as set forth in COMAR 01.01.1989.18 and 21.11.08 and shall remain in compliance throughout the term of this agreement.

General Provisions:

If Grantee's annual revenue exceeds $300,000 during the preceding fiscal or calendar year, Grantee shall provide to the RMC and the Administering Agency a copy of a certified financial audit report. If Grantee's annual revenue does not exceed $300,000 during the preceding fiscal or calendar year, Grantee shall provide a detailed statement of annual revenues and expenditures including a copy of the federal 990. Universities and local governments may provide alternative financial information as approved by the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Grant Review Board.

Inspection of Records. Grantee shall allow any duly authorized representative of the Administering Agency or the State of Maryland (the "State") to inspect and audit, at reasonable times, all records and documents of the Grantee relating to this Grant, which records shall be retained by Grantee for at least three years after the termination of this Agreement. Grantee shall also submit such other reports or information as the Administering Agency requires.

Acknowledgement. Grantee shall use the RMC logo to credit and acknowledge the RMC in all programs and promotional materials relating to activities of the project supported by this Grant Funding Agreement to include publications and ads on the web and in print. Any organization receiving funds from the RMC shall give credit to the RMC whenever and wherever credit is being given, including written, oral, broadcast and internet. To ensure proper credit to the RMC Grantees shall:

- Use the RMC's name and logo on printed materials related to the grant,
- Link to the RMC website from your organization's website,

- Include the RMC logo on event signage or publications at your events,
- Acknowledge our support in Power Point presentations, videos or reports,
- Make an announcement at one of your regular/special events or meetings,
- Mention the RMC's support in print, radio or television interviews you give about the organization, program or project.

Grantee's Certifications. As an inducement to Administering Agency to make the Grant, Grantee hereby certifies and warrants that:
Grantee has all requisite power and authority to enter into this Agreement.
This Agreement has been executed and delivered by Grantee in such manner and form as to comply with all applicable laws to make this Agreement the valid and legally binding act and agreement of Grantee.

Amendment. This Agreement, or any part hereof, may be amended from time to time only by written instrument executed by the Grantee, the RMC and the Administering Agency.

Assignment. Without the prior written approval of Administering Agency, the Grantee may neither assign all or any of the benefits of, nor delegate all or any of the duties imposed by this Agreement.

Default. A default shall consist of any breach of any of Grantee's covenants, agreements, warranties or certifications in this Agreement.

Remedies Upon Default.
(a) Upon the occurrence of any default, the Administering Agency shall have the right to terminate this Agreement by written notice to Grantee. In the event of termination, Grantor may require Grantee to repay to RMPIF within thirty days of receipt of written notice of default all Grant funds which have been disbursed to Grantee, and Grantee shall have no right to receive any undisbursed Grant Funds.
(b) In addition to the rights and remedies contained in this Agreement, the Administering Agency may at any time proceed to protect and enforce all rights available to Administering Agency by suit in equity, action at law, or by any other appropriate proceedings, which rights and remedies shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

Indemnification. Grantee releases the Administering Agency, Grantor and the State, and its employees or agents from, agrees that the Administering Agency, Grantor and the State, and its employees or agents shall not have any liability for, and agrees to protect, indemnify and save harmless the Administering Agency, Grantor and the State, and its employees or agents from and against any and all liabilities, suits, actions, claims, demands, losses, expenses and costs of every kind and nature incurred by, or asserted or imposed against, all or any of them, as a result of or in connection with the Grant. All money expended as a result of such liabilities, suits, actions, claims, demands, losses, expenses or costs, together with interest at a rate not to exceed the maximum interest rate permitted by law, shall constitute an indebtedness of Grantee and shall be immediately and without notice due and payable by Grantee to Grantor, Administering Agency, or the State, and/or its employees or agents, as their interests may appear.

Entire Agreement. This Agreement represents the complete, total and final understanding of the parties and no other understanding or representations, oral or written, regarding the subject matter of this Agreement shall be deemed to exist or to bind the parties hereto at the time of execution.

WITNESS: **«Grantee_POC_Organization»**

_____ By: _____

Printed Name: _____ Name: _____

Title: _____

WITNESS: **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

_____ By: _____

Printed Name: _____ Name: Karen Fedor

Title: Senior Agricultural Marketing Specialist

FY 2017 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund
Grant Agreement

Exhibit 1

Name of Grantee Organization: **«Grantee_POC_Organization»**

Amount Awarded: «Amount_Awarded» **Amount Requested: «RMPIF_Amount_Requested»**

Scope of Work Summary:

«Scope_of_Work»

Deliverables:

«Deliverables»

FY 2017 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund
Grant Agreement

Exhibit 2: Request for Disbursement

Company/Grantee Name: «Grantee_POC_Organization»

Federal Tax I.D.#: «Federal_Tax_ID_Number»

Send Check To: «Grantee_POC_Courtesy_Title» «Grantee_POC_First_Name» «Grantee_POC_Middle_Name» «Grantee_POC_Last_Name»«Grantee_POC_Suffix»
«Grantee_POCs_Title»
«Grantee_POC_Organization»
«Grantee_POC_Address»
«Grantee_POC_City», «Grantee_POC_State» «Grantee_POC_Zip»

FUNDS REQUESTED FOR THIS DISBURSEMENT: «Amount_Awarded»

Administrative Agency Representative: Karen Fedor

Grant Period: 09/01/2016 to 06/30/2017
Period Covered: FY 2017

I certify the above to be a true and accurate accounting of our costs.

Grantee Representative	**Administering Agency Representative**	**RMC Representative**
	Karen Fedor	Charlotte Davis
Name (please print)	Name (please print)	Name (please print)
	Senior Ag Marketing Specialist	Executive Director
Title	Title	Title
Date	Date	Date
Signature	Signature	Signature

PCA 39101
Obj. Code 1207

Attachment B

Grant Reporting Guidelines

Formatting Notes

Reports should be typed in 12-point font (Times New Roman, Calibri or similar), single-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. Pages should be numbered and include number of pages in the report (for example, page 1 of 6). Reports should be e-mailed to the following addresses:

- rmc.mda@maryland.gov
- Charlotte.Davis@maryland.gov

Cover Page

Please include a cover page for your report. This page should include:

- Organization name and contact information (full address, including mailing address if different, telephone number, and website)
- Type of report (interim or final)
- Report date
- Federal tax-exempt number. If not a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, provide fiscal agent's contact information and federal tax-exempt number
- Period that this report covers

Report Narrative

Please include these items in your report narrative:

- The dollar amount of this grant.
- The funding period of this grant (as outlined on page one of the Grant Agreement).
- Name, title, telephone number, and email address of CEO or executive director
- Name, title, telephone number, and email address of contact person for this report (if different)
- Signature of executive director or other authorizing official

The report narrative should tie back to the scope of work outlined in your original application and referenced in the Scope of Work and Deliverables ("Exhibit 1") listed in your Grant Agreement. It should also address the "Table of Goals and Measurable Objectives" outlined in your original application. An example of a previously submitted Table is provided below.

Goal	Measurable Objectives
Connect with X number of new individuals	Conducted three (3) community information sessions (give dates of number of individuals in attendance). How many have continued in the program?
Reduce attrition from program	No less than 85% attend at least 8 of 10 sessions
Achieve diverse participation in program	A minimum of 50% women, 25% minority Maryland demographics: 49% Male, 51% Female 76% White, 20% Black, 3% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Other
Establish new businesses in the region	3 new businesses per course, 6 total for year
Create new jobs in the region	6 new jobs per course, 12 total for year
Return on investment	1 new job per ≈ $5,000.00 spent on program overall

	1 new job per $1,243.54 of MAERDAF funding

Answer these questions in your report.

- What progress have you made toward achieving the results you described in your proposal during this period? What evidence do you have to demonstrate your success? If you did not achieve your intended results, why not?
- What do you consider to be the greatest strength(s) of your work? What do you consider to be the most important concern(s) – apart from finances – currently facing your organization (or project, if you received project support)? How many jobs were retained or created? If applicable, how many volunteer hours were created?
- Have there been any significant changes in your organization or the project since the grant was awarded (i.e., executive leadership, staff, facilities, location)?
- As applicable, describe any plans for moving forward. What, if anything, will you do differently?
- What are the organization's two (2) most significant financial challenges and how are you planning to address them?

Financial Information and Attachments

As outlined in the grant agreement, interim and final reports shall include **original documentation or certification verifying all grant fund expenditures, to date**. Interim reports shall include a forecast of expenses for the remainder of the grant period. Any overpayment or unspent funds shall be returned to the Grantor in conjunction with the final grant report.

For general support grants:

- Organization budget as submitted in the original proposal and actuals for this period. Explain any significant variances
- List the organization's three largest funding sources during this period

For project support grants:

- Organization and project budgets as submitted in the original proposal and actuals for this period. Explain any significant variances
- List other funding sources and amounts received for this project during this period

Attachments

Feel free to include copies of press releases, articles, event announcements that demonstrate or support the information outlined in the report narrative.

Additionally, as outlined in the original Grant Agreement, interim and final reports should provide documentation to demonstrate the Grantee has acknowledged funding by the RMC. Refer to item number three Acknowledgement under the section titled General Provisions, which states in part, "…the Grantee shall use the RMC logo to credit and acknowledge the RMC in all programs and promotional materials relating to activities of the project supported by this Grant Funding Agreement …"

Please call our offices at (410) 841-5772 with any questions or comments.