



**General Instructions
FY 2018
Rural Maryland Prosperity
Investment Fund
(RMPIF) – Rural
Entrepreneurship Development**

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 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund will 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 the quality of life. Rural entrepreneurship development would provide matching grants for entrepreneurial development activities of rural-serving nonprofit organizations and higher education institutions. Entrepreneurship, a key economic development strategy, supports existing rural business sectors (including agriculture and tourism), as well as innovation in technology and other economic development areas.

For more background, see: http://rural.maryland.gov/maerdaf_rmpif/

Important Dates:

- Friday, June 9, 2017 - Call for Proposal abstracts must be submitted electronically by 11:59pm.
- Tuesday, June 20, 2017 - Notification of decision on all submissions sent via e-mail; Accepted applicants notified to submit a full application.
- Monday, July 24, 2017 - Full application due to RMC by 11:59pm.
- Monday, August 14, 2017 – RMPIF Grant Recipients announced.

Fact Sheet and Guidelines for FY 2018 RMPIF Entrepreneurship Grant Applications

- **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS** must be a local government, institute of higher education, regional council, or be a 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. The applicant does not have to be located in a rural area or in the area it serves.
- **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS** must serve **more than one** rural county and be completed between August 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.
- **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS** must be in “Good Standing” with the State of Maryland. To check your status, go to <http://sdat.resiusa.org/UCC-Charter/Pages/CharterSearch/default.aspx>.
- **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.
- **THERE IS NO MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT.** However, the Grant Review Board is looking to fund six entrepreneurial projects in FY 2018.

- **PRIORITY IS GIVEN** to applicants that have secured matching funds from non-state sources; however, matching funds are not required. Federal funds are considered matching 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, 2018.
- **PREVIOUS AND CURRENT MAERDAF GRANTEES ARE ELIGIBLE** for a FY 2018 RMPIF grant **IF** they have met all the requirements of their previous grant agreements, including reporting deadlines.
- **THE RMPIF GRANT REVIEW BOARD** is comprised of representatives appointed by six state agencies. Its decisions are final. Those agencies are: the Rural Maryland Council, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Department of Business & Economic Development, the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, the Department of Housing & Community Development, and Department of Natural Resources.
- **ALL APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED** of the status of their application no later than August 14, 2017.

Application Process

❖ **Phase 1: Call for Abstract Proposals – Due June 9, 2017, 11:59pm**

- (1) The online form is available here: <https://ruralmaryland.typeform.com/to/qaN7vD>
- (2) The Application cannot be saved and completed later. Please prepare your information prior to starting the form. The following information is requested:
 - a. Organization Name, tax designation status, Federal Tax Identification Number, Mission Statement
 - b. Applicant Point of Contact Information, Project Point of Contact Information, Applicant and Project Organization Federal Tax Identification Number, tax designation status, website link.
 - c. Indication if organization is a past MAERDAF/RMPIF grantee, years if applicable.
 - d. Scope of Work (**Maximum of 750 words**)
 - i. Overall need to be addressed;
 - ii. How RMPIF funding will be used to meet that need;
 - iii. Number of individuals, businesses, communities, etc., served by RMPIF grant;
 - iv. Number of new partnerships that will be formed as a result of the grant.
 - e. Project Goals (**Maximum of 750 words**)
 - i. Describe what will be achieved as a result of this grant and how you intend to measure your success. Goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

❖ **Submitted Proposals will be notified June 20, 2017 of acceptance status. An invitation to submit a full application and materials will be provided to accepted proposal applicants.**

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

- Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted and will be deemed ineligible.
- Proposals must be submitted electronically to be received.
- Email notifications that the form has been received will be submitted to Applicant Point of Contact (POC) email addresses, provided on the form, upon submission.

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.