

# Rural Maryland Council Strategic Plan 2017-2020

## Mission

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) brings 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 communities.

We provide a venue for members of agriculture and natural resource-based industries, health care facilities, educational institutions, economic and community development organizations, for-profit and nonprofit corporations, and government agencies to cross traditional boundaries, share information, and address in a more holistic way the special needs and opportunities in Rural Maryland.

## Vision

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

## Goals

Goal #1: Encourage healthy, connected communities throughout Rural Maryland

Goal #2: Support the development and growth of vibrant economies

Goal #3: Foster stewardship of Maryland's natural resources

Goal #4: Maximize RMC outreach, resources and mission

**Goal #1:** Encourage healthy, connected communities throughout Rural Maryland through convening of stakeholders, education, public relations, and advocacy

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Attract and retain best and brightest in Rural Maryland (including youth)
- Support the increase in the number of rural households with internet access
- Facilitate planning to establish Center(s) for telemedicine services in underserved rural areas

### **METRICS (achieve by FY2020)**

- *Distribute funds in community development and health care grants as provided by formula under RMPIF and MAERDAF*
- *Convene two meetings addressing access to health care and preventive care in Rural Maryland*
- *Educate the healthcare community through an education campaign on the importance of following state requirements for screening*
- *Enable or host a Youth Engagement survey during FY2017-FY2020 in a rural region in the state*
- *Identify Transfer of Wealth Study to establish baseline*
- *% of rural households with school-aged children with increased internet access*

### **Strategies:**

- Leverage the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF), Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF), and Rural Maryland Foundation to generate additional investments to betterment of rural Maryland
- Effectively inform the public and stakeholders of the availability of MAERDAF and RMPIF resources
- Advocate for breaking through the “last mile” barrier to enable internet/cable services throughout Rural Maryland
- Enable research of *Best Practices* in rural health delivery in other states and facilitate the import of successful concepts to Maryland
- Continue/Escalate telemedicine initiative
- Collaborate with other state agencies to heighten awareness of challenges and opportunities to improve behavioral health in rural communities

## Key Actions

Action	Responsible	Due
1. Convene a roundtable discussion the “Last Mile” issue	Scott, Michael, Doris	October 2016
2. Continue regional coalitions of community development organizations	Kevin	September 2016
3. Each Committee will develop actions for the last strategies (above)	Tom, Josh, Mike, Scott	December 2016
4. Partner with an organization to create Center for Telemedicine	Tom (MRHA)	
5. Survey providers and resident re: internet access	staff	
6. Collect data from MD Department of Education re: school kids and rural broadband access	staff	

**Goal #2:** Support the development and growth of vibrant economies in Rural Maryland

### OBJECTIVES

- Economic outlook for Rural Maryland improves
- Increase employment opportunities
- Enhance and support entrepreneurship opportunities (new starts and growth)
- Protect and enhance agricultural and resource-based opportunities in Rural Maryland

### METRICS (Achieve by FY2020)

- *Distribute funds in entrepreneurship and infrastructure grants as provided by formula under RMPIF and MAERDAF*
- *Unemployment rate disparities between rural and urban communities decreases by 1% annually*
- *Increase the amount of dollars invested in RMPIF*
- *Increase the number of startups in rural counties by 2% annually*
- *Increase the number of jobs created and retained by allocated funds*
- *Increase the amount of leveraged funds in rural communities*
- *Increase the number of agribusinesses utilizing the internet for sales and marketing*

**Strategies:**

- Determine the most appropriate data to use and display for Economic Outlook for Rural Maryland
- Prepare and/or support outreach by strategic partners to legislative targets in Entrepreneurship in Rural Maryland (i.e. Angel Investment Tax Credit)
- Convene important conversations about entrepreneurship and opportunities in Rural Maryland (Statewide Forum, partner with Incubation Association)
- Support business competitions
- Provide grants and awards for outstanding entrepreneurial plans and businesses
- Create and enable opportunities for youth to be mentored in entrepreneurial endeavors
- Advocate and facilitate planning for breaking through the “last mile” barrier to enable internet/cable services throughout Rural Maryland
- Take RMC’s vision to key stakeholders to advocate for support
- Advocate for Angel Investment Tax credit
- Support Rural Counties in establishing Enterprise/Investment Zones
- Provide support and “Best Practices” for workforce training and apprenticeships for young people
- Capture and showcase outcomes of relevant projects funded through RMC grants
- Promote youth engagement and volunteer programs in partnership with schools and local governments
- Expand outreach efforts to underserved populations

**Key Actions**

Action	Responsible	Due
5. Host Business Competitions – Youth & Adult	Mike T	September 2016
6. Determine most appropriate data for baseline on Economic Outlook	Dan & Doris	
7. Advocate for Rural Investment Tax Credit	Mike T & Kevin	December 2016
8. Convene Entrepreneurial event	Mike T	

**Goal #3: Foster stewardship of Maryland’s natural resources****OBJECTIVES**

- Initiate/support/influence legislation impacting natural resource-based industries and natural resource stewardship using RMC-provided expertise
- Convene stakeholders to address challenges and/or opportunities related to Maryland’s natural resources and/or natural resource-based industries

Approved by RMC Executive Committee June 6, 2016

**METRICS (achieve by FY2020)**

1. *Convene or partner to convene one meeting a year to improve communications between stakeholders in ag and natural resources on topics of interest (including groups with little voice or those misunderstood/mistrusted)*

**Strategies:**

- Act as the leading convener for addressing rural issues relating to Chesapeake Bay 2025 (TMDL)
- Host a full Rural Summit in 2017 that showcases Maryland’s natural resources, and natural resource-based industries
- Sponsor research/data analysis of change in land use in Rural Maryland
- Take RMC’s vision to key stakeholders to advocate for support
- Convene stakeholders and host important conversations to identify common objectives that harmonize environmental and agricultural priorities (i.e. beekeepers, forestry, etc.)
- Consider value of reconvening the Ag & Natural Resources Working Committee
- Engage with Congressional Delegation on issues

**Key Actions**

Action	Responsible	Due
9. Explore Forum for TMDL	Exec Committee*	May 2017
10. Identify/secure date for focused Summit	Staff	August 2016
11. Identify/secure date for biennial statewide Summit	Staff	January 2017
12. Identify partners, sponsors, co-sponsors for Summit	Staff	June 2017
13. Evaluate & recommend how to energize Committee structure of RMC	Exec Committee*	September 2016
14. Convene Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee	Staff	2018
15. Advocate on Capitol Hill	Staff	

\*needs an individual to take the lead

**Goal #4:** Maximize RMC outreach, resources and mission through financial and organizational development

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Achieve adequate resources to support RMC programs (staff and financial) including RMPIF and MAERDAF for each fiscal year
2. Increase funding for Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)
3. Increase the participation and engagement of all RMC Committee members
4. Participate as a leader in the National Committee for Rural Councils
5. Complete key actions in RMC Strategic Plan

**METRICS (achieve by FY2020)**

1. *Achieve funds requested in budget submission each year*
2. *Host a national rural conference in Maryland in FY2018*
3. *Showcase successes of Rural Maryland Council at a national rural meeting*
4. *Provide coordinated guidelines on RMPIF and MAERDAF*
5. *Increase RMC staff to 4 by FY2020*

**Strategies:**

- Establish plan and process for ongoing financial development (grants and non-government)
- Leverage strategic plan as a means of achieving financial support into the Rural Maryland Foundation
- Develop a staffing plan to resource critical activities and programs (i.e. recruit an intern)
- Grow the number and engagement of Council members by
  - strengthening Committees (assign budgets, formalize charge, provide SOPs)
- Clarify value to volunteers within RMC (awards, appreciation events)
- Assess progress in reaching Strategic Plan goals semiannually
- Leverage expertise of other state rural development councils for Maryland forums
- Share Maryland success stories and data with other state rural development councils

**Key Actions**

Action	Responsible	Due
13. Develop rural engagement program		2018
14. Board Retreat to assess progress and program evaluation	Executive Committee	April 2019
15. Executive Director serves in a leadership role in national organization	Charlotte	September 2016

Approved by RMC Executive Committee June 6, 2016

16. Host Partners for Rural America national conference	Staff	August 2017
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