



RURAL MARYLAND COUNCIL ANNOUNCES FY 2016 MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FUND (MAERDAF) GRANTS

Nonprofit organizations and community colleges in our State's rural regions often lack access to the public and private sector philanthropic opportunities they need to obtain important programmatic and special project funding. Moreover, local governments, especially those in economically distressed rural regions, do not have the financial wherewithal to fully address these important developmental needs. The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) was established in 2000 to offer financial assistance to rural nonprofits organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education. In addition, MAERDAF offers grants to community colleges that support small and agricultural businesses with enhanced training and technical assistance.

During Fiscal Year 2016, a total of 53 rural-serving organizations submitted applications requesting over \$890,000 in grants. A total of 16 grants totaling \$167,000 were distributed to 16 organizations:

- Allegany College, \$25,000
- Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, \$8,638
- Asian American Center of Frederick, \$6,500
- Calvert County Farm Bureau, \$7,075
- Chesapeake Leadership Foundation, \$8,000
- Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center, \$10,000
- Crossroads Community, Inc., \$4,875
- Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center, \$17,841
- Frederick CTC FFA, \$24,889
- LEAD Maryland, \$10,000
- Maintaining Active Citizens, Inc., \$8,000
- Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, \$2,500
- Mid-Shore Regional Council, \$3,500
- Queen Anne's County Library/Allegany County Library, \$9,900
- Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, \$11,900
- Western Maryland Area Health Education Center, \$8,350

Between 2001 and 2015, the MAERDAF program has awarded more than \$2.96 million in grants to 74 rural-serving nonprofit organizations. Many of these organizations have been able to establish or continue programs and projects that have had a significant and positive impact on Rural Maryland because of the MAERDAF program. Moreover, the Fund has helped many nonprofits develop institutional capacity, improve grant-writing skills, and enhance the internal development of volunteer boards and staff.

Founded in 1994, the Rural Maryland Council operates under the direction of a 40-member executive board in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner. It serves as the state's federally designated rural development council and functions as a voice for rural Maryland, advocating for and helping rural communities and businesses across the state to flourish and to gain equity to its suburban and urban counterparts. The vision for RMC is the ultimate realization that citizens living in rural communities are achieving success in education and employment, have access to affordable, quality health care and other vital public services, and live in an environment where natural and cultural resources are being sustained for future generations.

To learn more, call (410) 841-5774, email rmc.mda@maryland.gov or connect with the Rural Maryland Council at [facebook.com/RuralMaryland](https://www.facebook.com/RuralMaryland) or on Twitter @RuralMaryland.