



50 Harry S. Truman Parkway • Annapolis, MD 21401  
Office: 410-841-5772 • Fax: 410-841-5987 • TTY: 800-735-2258  
Email: [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov)  
Website: [www.rural.maryland.gov](http://www.rural.maryland.gov)

*Scott Warner, Chairman*

*Charlotte Davis, Executive Director*

For Immediate Release

Contact: Charlotte Davis  
(410) 841-5774

## **RURAL MARYLAND COUNCIL ANNOUNCES FISCAL YEAR 2015 MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FUND RECIPIENTS**

The Rural Maryland Council is pleased to announce the winners of grant funding for Fiscal Year 2015 from the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund. Established in 2000, the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistant Fund (MAERDAF) offers important financial support to rural-serving nonprofit organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education efforts. The Fund also provides targeted financial assistance to community colleges that support small and agricultural businesses through enhanced training and technical assistance offerings.

**During Fiscal Year 2015, a total of 54 rural-serving organizations submitted applications requesting more than \$1,000,000 in grants from the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund. This year, however, only \$170,000 was available which was distributed to 17 rural-serving nonprofits. Recipients are:**

- **Adkins Arboretum, Ltd: \$6,850**
- **Caroline Economic Development Corporation: \$11,504**
- **Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center, Inc.: \$10,000**
- **College of Southern Maryland Foundation: \$11,500**
- **Crossroads Community, Inc.: \$4,875**
- **Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center: \$14,923**
- **Enchanted Haven Horse Rescue: \$8,000**
- **Evergreen Heritage Center Foundation, Inc.: \$23,500**
- **Habitat for Humanity Choptank: \$6,150**
- **LEAD Maryland Foundation: \$10,000**
- **Lower Shore Land Trust: \$7,054**
- **Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts: \$2,500**
- **Off Street Sports Performance: \$15,000**
- **Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area: \$15,500**
- **Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art: \$12,795**
- **Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council: \$4,882**
- **Women Supporting Women: \$4,908**

Between FY 2001 and FY 2014, the MAERDAF program has awarded more than \$2.8 million in grants to 57 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.

The Rural Maryland Council administers MAERDAF in partnership with the Maryland Departments of Agriculture Health and Mental Hygiene Business and Economic Development, Housing and Community Development, and Natural Resources.

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**“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”**