



**General Guidelines and Instructions
FY 2016
Maryland Agricultural Education and
Rural Development Assistance Fund
(MAERDAF)**

O **verview:** The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF), administered by the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), provides grants to rural-serving nonprofit organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education. Also eligible are rural community colleges that support small and agricultural businesses through enhanced training and technical assistance.

MAERDAF's goal is to increase the overall capacity of rural-serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges to meet a multitude of rural development challenges and to help them establish new public/private partnerships for leveraging non-state sources of funding. **For Fiscal Year 2016, the RMC is particularly interested in proposals that address the following: Agriculture, Energy, Rural Broadband, Healthcare, Youth Engagement and Workforce/Economic Development.** Regardless, the Grant Review Board will give full consideration to any application that is submitted.

For more background, see: www.rural.maryland.gov

Application Deadline: July 10, 2015. Awards will be announced by August 14, 2015.

Fact Sheet and Guidelines for FY 2016 MAERDAF Grant Applications

- **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS** must be a 501(c)(3) IRS tax designation or similar and serve a regional or statewide rural constituency. Trade associations are not eligible. 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, 2015 and June 30, 2016.
- **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS** must be in "Good Standing" with the State of Maryland. Go to <http://sdat.resiusa.org/UCC-Charter/Pages/CharterSearch/default.aspx>. We do not require a copy of the certificate; it is sufficient to provide a screen shot and attach it with your application. We will also accept a copy of the certificate if it is available.
- **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.
- **THE HISTORIC MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT IS \$25,000.** The average grant over the life of the program is about \$18,000.
- **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, 2016.
- **PAST AND CURRENT GRANTEEES ARE ELIGIBLE** for a FY 2016 grant **IF** they have met all the requirements of their previous grant agreements, including reporting deadlines.

- **THE MAERDAF 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, 2015.

How to Submit Your Application Packages

❖ **A complete MAERDAF Application includes:**

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

❖ **Applications will only be accepted by email this year.**

- Include all required items in ONE Microsoft Word or PDF file, and
- Be sure we receive it by midnight on July 10, 2015. 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.

If you have any questions, please contact **Charlotte Davis, Executive Director of the Rural Maryland Council** at: charlotte.davis@maryland.gov or (401) 841-5774.

Thank you for applying.