

FY2021 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) Grant Guidelines and Criteria: Rural Regional Planning and Development Councils

Overview: The objective of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) 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 Fund will serve the interests of the entire State by:

- Encouraging the increase of entrepreneurial activity and commerce and a balanced economy in the State;
- Relieving conditions of unemployment and underemployment in rural areas;
- Assisting in the retention of valuable farm and forest land for productive use by present and future generations;
- Promoting intergovernmental cooperation and public sector/private sector partnerships in and between rural and other areas;
- Enhancing the deployment of housing, transportation, water, wastewater, and broadband communications infrastructure and services in rural areas;
- Supporting rural commercial center redevelopment and community revitalization efforts; and,
- Generally promoting the health, happiness, safety, employment opportunity, and general welfare of the residents of each of the rural counties and municipal corporations of the State.

Regional Councils: The General Assembly has established five regional planning and development councils to concentrate on the needs of specific rural regions and ensure that those areas are not overlooked in public policy discussions. Each council serves a three-county area that is geographically, culturally and socio-economically similar. By working together and ignoring jurisdictional lines when need be, the rural regions have become stronger and more effective in finding solutions to the challenges before them.

The regional councils have brought elected, civic, and business leaders in their regions together to help create economic development strategies, preserve and assist agricultural and resource-based industries, obtain federal funding for infrastructure improvements, coordinate and sometimes even manage regional transportation projects (including public transit services), and develop support for a diverse set of public policy initiatives.

Rural regional planning and development assistance will provide grants specifically for projects and activities of the five rural regional planning and development councils and for other multi-county rural improvement efforts. The Councils have established strategic needs within the rural communities which will be reflected in the approved grant agreements.

Fiscal Year 2021: For Fiscal Year 2021, the State has budgeted \$2,053,525.00 in General Funds for the Regional Council portion of the RMPPIF program. However, *grant awards are subject to funding availability.*

Please contact the RMC Executive Director at (410) 841-5772 for any administrative guidance. For more background, see: www.rural.maryland.gov

Thank you for applying to the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund.

Important Dates

Full Application Due: Friday, July 24, 2020

Awards will be announced by Monday, August 17, 2020

Guidelines and Criteria for FY 2021 Regional Council RMPIF Grant Applications

Eligible Applicants: Tri-County Council of Western Maryland, Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland, Upper Shore Regional Council, Mid-Shore Regional Council, Tri-County Council of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and multicounty efforts serving rural communities in areas not served by the regional councils.

Grant Amounts: GRANT AWARDS ARE SUBJECT TO FUNDING AVAILABILITY. Each regional council is eligible to receive \$410,705.00 in FY2021 for rural regional planning and development assistance. The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Grant Review Board will review any applications that may be received from a multicounty effort (Frederick, Carroll and Harford Counties) in areas not served by an existing regional council.

Changes and Unused 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, 2021.

Grant agreements: Awardees are required to execute a grant agreement. A sample blank grant agreement is included as Attachment A.

Record keeping: Grantees are required to record expenditures and file an interim and final report with the RMC. Reporting guidelines are included as Attachment B.

Application Process

Full Application Proposals – Due Friday, July 24, 2020 at 5:00pm

- **The Councils online Grant Portal is available here:**
<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=ruralmaryland>
- **Don't let your proposal be declared ineligible on a technicality:**
 - Proposals received after the deadline *will not be accepted* and will be deemed ineligible.
 - Proposals must be submitted through the Grant Portal to be received.

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.

Attachment A

GRANT AGREEMENT FOR DISBURSMENT OF FY2021 RMPHF AWARDS

Project Name:

Grantee Name: «Grantee_POC_Organization»

Address: «Grantee_POC_Address»

Federal ID Number: «Federal_Tax_ID_Number»

Fiscal Contact: «Grantee_POC_First_Name»
«Grantee_POC_Middle_Name»
«Grantee_POC_Last_Name»«Grantee_POC_S
uffix»

Organization: «Grantee_POC_Organization»
Address: «Grantee_POC_Address»
City, State Zip:
«Grantee_POC_City», «Grantee_POC_State»
«Grantee_POC_Zip»
Phone: «Grantee_POC_Phone»
Fax: «Grantee_POC_Fax»
Email: «Grantee_POC_Email»

Project Contact:
«Project_POC_Courtesy_Title»
«Project_POC_First_Name»
«Project_POC_Middle_Name»
«Project_POC_Last_Name»«Project_POC_S
uffix»

Organization: «Project_POC_Organization»
Address: «Project_POC_Address»
City, State Zip:
«Project_POC_City», «Project_POC_State»
«Project_POC_Zip»
Phone: «Project_POC_Phone»
Fax: «Project_POC_Fax»
Email: «Project_POC_Email»

The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (the "Fund") provides funding to rural regional planning and economic development organizations, rural entrepreneurship and healthcare programs, institutions of higher education and advanced technology centers at community colleges, as described in State Finance and Procurement Article, Section 2-206 Annotated Code of Maryland (the "Act"). Under the Act, the Rural Maryland Council ("RMC") (the "Grantor") has designated the Maryland Department of Agriculture (the "Administering Agency") to administer the grant with the above named organization. The Administering Agency has designated the following to be its official contact: Charlotte Davis, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401. The following conditions apply.

Grantor and Grantee agree as follows:

The purpose of this Agreement is to provide a grant of «Amount_In_Words» («Amount_Awarded») to Grantee to assist in achieving the overall project and/or programmatic goals set forth in the Grantee's FY 2021 RMPHF Grant Application and referenced in the Scope of Work and Deliverables ("Exhibit 1") attached to this Agreement and incorporated herein. Specifically, these funds are to be used for those Deliverables as outlined in Exhibit 1. Significant changes in the scope of work are not permitted. Minor changes that adhere to the original intent of the grant and maintain the essential integrity of the grant's purpose may be allowed provided the Grantor and the Administering Agency agree that such changes are consistent with the Board's intent.

Performance under this Agreement commences on **August 1, 2020** and continues until agreed upon services are completed, but in any case no later than **June 30, 2021**.

Upon execution of this Agreement and receipt of "Request for Disbursement" ("Exhibit 2"), the Administering Agency will approve **disbursement of 100 percent** of the Grant funds to Grantee.

Reporting: The Grantee shall provide an interim programmatic and financial report no later than **January 27, 2021** to the Administering Agency. The Grantee shall provide a final programmatic and financial report to the Rural Maryland Council and the Administering Agency Representative no later than **July 31, 2021**.

Interim and final reports shall include **original documentation or certification verifying all grant fund expenditures**, to date. Interim reports shall include a forecast of expenses for the remainder of the grant period. Any overpayment or unspent funds shall be returned to the Grantor in conjunction with the final grant report.

Interim and final reports must be submitted through the Grant Portal located here, <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=ruralmaryland>.

By signing this agreement, the Grantee certifies that it:

- Complies with all applicable federal, state, and local law, including laws relating to discrimination in employment;
- Complies with Maryland's policy concerning drug and alcohol free work places, as set forth in COMAR 01.01.1989.18 and 21.11.08 and shall remain in compliance throughout the term of this agreement.

General Provisions:

If Grantee's annual revenue exceeds \$750,000.00 during the preceding fiscal or calendar year, Grantee shall provide to the RMC and the Administering Agency a copy of a certified financial audit report. If Grantee's annual revenue does not exceed \$750,000.00 during the preceding fiscal or calendar year, Grantee shall provide a detailed statement of annual revenues and expenditures including a copy of the federal 990. Universities and local governments may provide alternative financial information as approved by the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Grant Review Board.

Inspection of Records: Grantee shall allow any duly authorized representative of the Administering Agency or the State of Maryland (the "State") to inspect and audit, at reasonable times, all records and documents of the Grantee relating to this Grant, which records shall be retained by Grantee for at least three years after the termination of this Agreement. Grantee shall also submit such other reports or information as the Administering Agency requires.

Acknowledgement: Grantee shall use the RMC logo to credit and acknowledge the RMC in all programs and promotional materials relating to activities of the project supported by this Grant Funding Agreement to include publications and ads on the web and in print. Any organization receiving funds from the RMC shall give credit to the RMC whenever and wherever credit is being given, including written, oral, broadcast and internet. To ensure proper credit to the RMC Grantees shall:

- Use the RMC's name and logo on printed materials related to the grant;
- Link to the RMC website from your organization's website;
- Include the RMC logo on event signage or publications at your events;

- Acknowledge our support in Power Point presentations, videos or reports;
- Make an announcement at one of your regular/special events or meetings;
- Mention the RMC's support in print, radio or television interviews you give about the organization, program or project; and,
- Grantee shall notify local and state legislators of grant award received, and consider participating in, or sending an organization representative, the annual legislative event, Rural Maryland Day in February 2021.

Grantee's Certifications: As an inducement to Administering Agency to make the Grant, Grantee hereby certifies and warrants that:

- Grantee has all requisite power and authority to enter into this Agreement.
- This Agreement has been executed and delivered by Grantee in such manner and form as to comply with all applicable laws to make this Agreement the valid and legally binding act and agreement of Grantee.

Amendment: This Agreement, or any part hereof, may be amended from time to time only by written instrument executed by the Grantee, the RMC and the Administering Agency.

Assignment: Without the prior written approval of Administering Agency, the Grantee may neither assign all or any of the benefits of, nor delegate all or any of the duties imposed by this Agreement.

Default: A default shall consist of any breach of any of Grantee's covenants, agreements, warranties or certifications in this Agreement.

Remedies Upon Default:

(a) Upon the occurrence of any default, the Administering Agency shall have the right to terminate this Agreement by written notice to Grantee. In the event of termination, Grantor may require Grantee to repay to RMPIF within thirty days of receipt of written notice of default all Grant funds which have been disbursed to Grantee, and Grantee shall have no right to receive any undisbursed Grant Funds.

(b) In addition to the rights and remedies contained in this Agreement, the Administering Agency may at any time proceed to protect and enforce all rights available to Administering Agency by suit in equity, action at law, or by any other appropriate proceedings, which rights and remedies shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

Indemnification: Grantee releases the Administering Agency, Grantor and the State, and its employees or agents from, agrees that the Administering Agency, Grantor and the State, and its employees or agents shall not have any liability for, and agrees to protect, indemnify and save harmless the Administering Agency, Grantor and the State, and its employees or agents from and against any and all liabilities, suits, actions, claims, demands, losses, expenses and costs of every kind and nature incurred by, or asserted or imposed against, all or any of them, as a result of or in connection with the Grant. All money expended as a result of such liabilities, suits, actions, claims, demands, losses, expenses or costs, together with interest at a rate not to exceed the maximum interest rate permitted by law, shall constitute an indebtedness of Grantee and shall be immediately and without notice due and payable by Grantee to Grantor,

Administering Agency, or the State, and/or its employees or agents, as their interests may appear.

Entire Agreement: This Agreement represents the complete, total and final understanding of the parties and no other understanding or representations, oral or written, regarding the subject matter of this Agreement shall be deemed to exist or to bind the parties hereto at the time of execution.

WITNESS:

«Grantee_POC_Organization»

By: _____

Printed Name: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

WITNESS:

Rural Maryland Council

By: _____

Printed Name: _____

Name: Charlotte Davis

Title: Executive Director

**FY2021 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund
Grant Agreement**

Exhibit 1

Name of Grantee Organization: «Grantee_POC_Organization»

Amount Awarded: «Amount_Awarded» **Amount Requested:**
«RMPIF_Amount_Requested»

Scope of Work Summary:

«Scope_of_Work»

Deliverables:

«Deliverables»

Attachment B

Grant Reporting Guidelines

Grant Portal

- All grant items must be submitted through RMC's Grant Portal, found here: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=ruralmaryland>
- Please follow instructions in the portal to complete the process.

Report Narrative

Items to be included in report narrative:

1. The dollar amount of this grant.
2. Matching funds secured.
3. The funding period of this grant (as outlined on page one of the Grant Agreement).
4. Name, title, telephone number, and email address of contact person for this report.
5. Number of jobs created/retained.
6. Number of individuals served if appropriate.
7. Number of instructional hours delivered.
8. Number of services delivered.
9. Number of studies or research tools created.
10. Number of loans made if appropriate.
11. Dollar amount of capital investments if appropriate.
12. Signature of executive director or other authorizing official.

The report narrative should tie back to the scope of work outlined in your original application and referenced in the Scope of Work and Deliverables ("Exhibit 1") listed in your Grant Agreement. It should also address the "Table of Goals and Measurable Objectives" outlined in your original application. An example is provided below:

Goal	Measurable Objectives
Connect with X number of new individuals	Conducted three (3) community information sessions (give dates of number of individuals in attendance). How many have continued in the program?
Reduce attrition from program	No less than 85% attend at least 8 of 10 sessions
Achieve diverse participation in program	A minimum of 50% women, 25% minority Maryland demographics: 49% Male, 51% Female 76% White, 20% Black, 3% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Other
Establish new businesses in the region	3 new businesses per course, 6 total for year
Create new jobs in the region	6 new jobs per course, 12 total for year
Return on investment	1 new job per ≈ \$5,000.00 spent on program overall 1 new job per \$1,243.54 of MAERDAF funding

Your report should address the following questions:

- What progress have you made toward achieving the results you described in your proposal during this period? What evidence do you have to demonstrate your success? If you did not achieve your intended results, why not?
- What do you consider to be the greatest strength(s) of your work? What do you consider to be the most important concern(s) – apart from finances – currently facing your organization (or project, if you received project support)?
- How many jobs were retained or created? If applicable, how many volunteer hours were created?
- Have there been any significant changes in your organization or the project since the grant was awarded (i.e., executive leadership, staff, facilities, location)?
- As applicable, describe any plans for moving forward. What, if anything, will you do differently?
- What are the organization's two (2) most significant financial challenges and how are you planning to address them?

Financial Information and Attachments

As outlined in the grant agreement, interim and final reports shall include **original documentation or certification verifying all grant fund expenditures, to date**. Interim reports shall include a forecast of expenses for the remainder of the grant period. Any overpayment or unspent funds shall be returned to the Grantor in conjunction with the final grant report.

For general support grants:

- Organization budget as submitted in the original proposal and actuals for this period. Explain any significant variances
- List the organization's three largest funding sources during this period

For project support grants:

- Organization and project budgets as submitted in the original proposal and actuals for this period. Explain any significant variances
- List other funding sources and amounts received for this project during this period

Attachments

Feel free to include copies of press releases, articles, event announcements that demonstrate or support the information outlined in the report narrative. These can be uploaded through the Grant Portal.

Additionally, as outlined in the original Grant Agreement, interim and final reports should provide documentation to demonstrate the Grantee has acknowledged funding by the RMC. Refer to item number three Acknowledgement under the section titled General Provisions, which states in part, "...the Grantee shall use the RMC logo to credit and acknowledge the RMC in all programs and promotional materials relating to activities of the project supported by this Grant Funding Agreement ..."

Please call our offices at (410) 841-5772 with any questions or comments.