

MAERDAF Statute

§2–206.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Board” means the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Board.

(3) “Council” means the Rural Maryland Council established under Title 13, Subtitle 4 of the Economic Development Article.

(4) “Fund” means the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund.

(b) The General Assembly finds and declares that:

(1) many nonprofit organizations that serve the needs of the rural areas of the State experience fiscal difficulties in addressing the areas of economic and community development and agriculture and forestry education because of the inadequacy of funding resources for them;

(2) these organizations do not have the access to private and public sources of funding that are generally more available to nonprofit groups that serve the needs of the metropolitan areas of the State; and

(3) as a result, the rural areas of the State face a serious deficit of resources where the need, in many instances, is greatest.

(c) (1) There is a Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund that shall be administered by the Council.

(2) The purpose of the Fund is to provide funding:

(i) to rural regional planning and economic development organizations and rural community development programs whose missions and work have statewide implications and merit State support; and

(ii) to augment the efforts of advanced technology centers and similar programs that serve agricultural and natural resources based small businesses in rural areas through community colleges.

(3) (i) The Fund is a continuing, nonlapsing fund which is not subject to § 7–302 of this article.

(ii) The Treasurer shall separately hold and the Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

(iii) The Treasurer may invest money in the Fund in the same manner as other State money may be invested.

(4) Expenditures from the Fund may only be made:

(i) pursuant to an appropriation approved by the General Assembly in the annual State budget;

or

(ii) by the budget amendment procedure provided for in § 7–209 of this article, provided that:

1. the budget amendment and supporting information have been submitted to the budget committees for their review and comment; and

2. at least 45 days have elapsed from the time the budget amendment and supporting information were submitted to the budget committees.

(d) The Council shall award grants on the basis of the binding recommendations of the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Board.

(e) (1) There is a Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Board.

(2) The Board shall consist of:

(i) the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary's designee;

(ii) the Secretary of Commerce or the Secretary's designee;

(iii) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development or the Secretary's designee;

(iv) the Secretary of Health or the Secretary's designee;

(v) the Secretary of Natural Resources or the Secretary's designee; and

(vi) the Chairman of the Council or the Chairman's designee.

(3) The agencies listed in paragraph (2)(i) through (v) of this subsection may assist the Council with administering individual grant awards.

(4) The Board shall:

(i) establish procedures for applications for grants;

(ii) review applications for grants; and

(iii) make binding recommendations to the Council regarding the recipients of grants and the amount of the grants.

(5) The Board shall give funding priority to organizations described in subsection (c)(2)(i) of this section that have:

(i) obtained an equal matching amount of funding from a source other than the State in the immediate prior fiscal year; or

(ii) sufficient evidence of a commitment of a third party funding source to provide an equal matching amount of funding in the current fiscal year.

(f) (1) A grant recipient shall submit to the Council written documentation of how the grant recipient spent or otherwise used the grant.

(2) On or before October 1 each year, the Council shall submit to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly, a written report that includes:

(i) the number of grants made during the fiscal year;

(ii) the names of the recipients of the grants;

(iii) the specific purpose of each grant awarded; and

(iv) documentation of how the grant recipient spent or otherwise used the grant.