



2023 Virtual Rural Maryland Day
February 9th, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm



Welcome to Virtual Rural Maryland Day! We are very happy you can join us for this special time to connect with legislator's one-on-one. We promise it will be a great day for you and appreciate your patience as we navigate this virtual day together.

Participant Meeting Packet Contents

- I. Agenda**
- II. Best Practices & Helpful Directives**
- III. Participant List and Team Assignments**
- IV. Legislative Appointment Schedule**
- V. Legislative Priorities**
- VI. Talking Points and Partner Handouts**

Meeting Zoom Link:

Rural Maryland Council is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Rural Maryland Day

Time: February 9, 2023, 9:00am to 12:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88649916794?pwd=RXlIRzVUNmVYZ0dnazdjSGdKa1laQT09>

Meeting ID: 886 4991 6794

Passcode: 160190

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,88649916794#,,,,*160190# US (Washington DC)

+13092053325,,88649916794#,,,,*160190# US

Call-In Options:

- 877 853 5257 US Toll-free
- 888 475 4499 US Toll-free

RMC staff are available to help! You can identify staff as they will have RMC written before their name. You can contact them by sending messages via the chat in the Zoom main session area or reach out to them by phone to call or text using the numbers highlighted in the box.

Charlotte Davis: 301-371-8183

Megan D’Arcy: 667-458-9101

Amanda Clevenger: 410-841-5772



Virtual Rural Maryland Day

Thursday, February 9, 2023

8:30am – 12:30pm



Rural Maryland Day Agenda

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

3:30pm – 4:00pm	Briefing Call to review Zoom Logistics, Day's schedule and talking points
<i>Directive: Review talking points and Familiarize participants on the Zoom platform and practice teams entering/exiting Zoom breakout rooms.</i>	


Thursday, February 9, 2023

8:30am – 8:45pm	Welcome and Briefing
<i>Directive: Breakout meeting rooms will be set up prior to the meeting. Participants will be welcomed to Rural Maryland Day in the Zoom main session area and directed to rename themselves to include their Team. {e.g. Susan O'Neill, Team 1}. Participants will move themselves to assigned rooms that will be numbered Team 1 through Team 8 (Note number of teams may change). Each team has been assigned a team lead.</i>	
8:45pm – 9:00am	Move Into Breakout Rooms
<i>Directive: Participants move themselves to their designated breakout rooms to meet your Team Leader, introduce one and other, and review breakout room logistics.</i>	
9:00am – 12:00pm	Legislative Appointments Zoom Breakout Rooms
<i>Directive: RMC staff will greet legislators in the Zoom main session and will inform them their Team # breakout room to join. RMC staff will be able to join meetings to inform participants and legislators when it is time to meet with a new legislator.</i>	
12:00pm – 12:30pm	Debrief
<i>Directives: 2 minutes prior to noon, RMC staff will send a message to participants in meeting rooms that it's time to return to the main session. The meeting rooms will close at the end of the 2-minute period, and everyone will return to the main session. Staff will lead debrief.</i>	




2023 Virtual Rural Maryland Day February 9th, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Best Practices for Attending an Online Meeting

- Prepare for your meeting in **advance**
 - Be sure to have log-in information and necessary documents prior to the meeting.
 - Remove distractions from the area where meeting attendance will be, if possible.
 - Turn off or silence your phone (if you aren't using it to call in)
 - Turn off email, text, or phone that may interfere with focus while attending.
- Log into the session a few minutes early so facilitator will know when everyone is in attendance.
- Avoid rustling papers, eating noisy foods or making other distracting noises in the background.
- Be careful not to interrupt others when they're speaking. Use the raise hand  icon in the tool bar (under reactions).
- Mute your mic when you aren't speaking. All participants will be muted upon entry.
- Using a headset for better voice over microphone and hearing the voices of others can be helpful.

Helpful Directives

1. **We will be using the cloud-based video communication application Zoom for Rural Maryland Day. If you are not familiar with Zoom and/or do not have an account, learn more about it here [Zoom Meetings | Zoom](#). An account is free so be sure to set one up prior to this event.**
2. At the time of the meeting, click on the zoom link found on the agenda, in your email or on the RMC events page - [Rural Maryland Day](#). You will be asked to type in the meeting ID provided. Note you can call in if you do not have access to a computer by using the toll-free phone number provided.
3. **Once you join the meeting, you will be placed in a waiting room. This is the perfect time to 'Include your Team #' before your name by hovering your pointer over you name in the left-hand corner of your screen. Your Team is listed on the Rural Maryland Day Team handout that is part of this packet. Right click and choose rename. After your name, please type your team number-eg. 'Susan O'Neill, Team 1'. Your designative team will be used throughout the day to help guide you and RMC staff to your specific breakout room once you enter the main session. *RMC staff will be able to help you if are unable to update your name at this time.***
4. RMC staff will allow you to join the main session from the waiting room. Once in the main session, you will be joining all of the participants for the day. The main session is where we will all gather for the welcome/briefing from 8:30 am to 9:00 am and the debriefing/proclamation from 12:00pm to 12:30pm.
5. **Breakout Rooms: Each Team is associated with a breakout room that is labeled Team 1 through Team 8. You will be directed to enter your Team Breakout Room at 8:45am. Unless otherwise assigned, you will stay in this 'Team Room' for the morning to meet one-on-one with legislators or their staff. RMC staff will welcome legislators in the main session area and will direct them to their 'Team Breakout Room'.**

- **Legislative appointments** are scheduled in 15-minute increments. Refer to the appointment scheduler for your Team to see who your Team is meeting with as you may have more time to talk with a legislator if you do not have back-to-back appointments.
-  This is the **HELP icon** that will be found in your tool bar at the bottom of your screen. You can click on this anytime to invite an RMC staff person to join the meeting if you need help.
- **Chat feature**-Found in your tool bar, you can use this to send a chat to everyone in the team meeting only. This might be helpful if you have a question you want to ask.
- **Leaving the meeting:** There is a blue icon that states 'Leave Room' on your tool bar. Once you click on this, you will have the option to **leave the break out room** and be taken back to the main session or you can exit Rural Maryland Day by clicking 'Leave Meeting'. A message will be sent to all the meeting rooms when it's time to return to the main session at 12:00pm.

Role of Team Leader and Alternate

- Each Team has a designated **Team Leader** - (highlighted in bold on the Rural Maryland Day Team handout (that is part of this packet)
- The role of the Team Leader is to welcome and introduce the Legislator to Rural Maryland Day and the gathered participants. Note: RMC staff will be directing legislators to your 'Team Rooms'. There maybe a time that a legislator is running late or does not show up. Be patient and use the help icon to ask for an RMC staff member to join the meeting to help. Refer to downtime suggestions below.
- When the legislator appointment is over, the Legislator can click 'Leave Meeting' to exit. Please invite them to join back at noon to for the debriefing, closing remarks and proclamation if available.
- Keep time of the meeting, especially if you have back-to-back appointments.
- Ensure all team members are given the opportunity to speak with the legislator.
- Designate a team member to complete the follow-up forms (provided as a separated word document to participants) if a Legislator has a question or comment to share. Completed forms should be sent to RMC by email to rmc.mda@maryland.gov.
- If there is any down time, here are some suggestions:
 - Introductions
 - Review Talking points
 - Information exchange
 - Bathroom break

2023 Rural Maryland Day - Participant Team Assignments

First Name	Last Name	Team Assignment
Chris	Abell	1
Chiffon	Abney	1
A. C.	Alrely	2
Jess	Ames	1
Dawn	Beitzel	2
Richard C.	Blair	3
Melissa	Bolyard	3
Jacinta	Bottoms-Spencer	3
Gilbert	Bowling	1
Michelle	Boyle	2
Kathie	Brady	3
Beth	Brewster	3
Mary	Buffington	1
Kerrie	Bunting	3
Nadine	Burton	3
Linda	Castrilli	2
Ashley	Clark	3
Genevieve	Croker	4
Cheryl	DeBerry	5
Graham	Dodge	3
Kelly	Dudeck	6
Kim	Durst	8
Remi	Duyile	7
Christina	Eismann	5
Cindy	Feist	4
Diana	Flores	4
Sarah	Frey	5
Angeli	Gabriel	6
Amanda	Glatzel	7
Ed	Goyda	8
Kenesia	Greene	4
Leslie	Grunden	5
Anne	Hairston-Strang	7
Leslie	Hart	3
John	Hartline (Team #3 Leader)	3
Josh	Hastings (Team #4 Leader)	4
Susie	Hayward	6
Bob	Hendricks	5
Bradley	Henry	5
Alex	Hermance	6
Yolanda	Hipski	2

Jean	Holloway	8
Elizabeth	Hulett	8
Stan	Jacobs	5
Reza	Jafari	6
Charles	James	7
Kaprece	James	8
Darren	Jarboe	5
Erica	Joseph	7
Liz	LaCorte	1
Shay	Lewis-Sisco	8
Mel	Litter	3
Karen	Malkin	5
Nan	Mann	6
Maria	McDonald	2
Steve	McHenry (Team #7 Leader)	7
Wendolyn	McKenzie	8
Grayson	Middleton	3
Lisa	Moran	6
Cristy	Morrell	5
Bill	Murphy	6
Shawna	Nelms	7
Patience	Ngoh	1
Sheena	Ogee	2
Susan	O'Neill (Team #1 Leader)	1
Janice	Palmer	8
Luke	Patton	7
Alma	Plummer	2
Larry	Porter	4
Sandra	Pruitt	2
Jessica	Ransome	8
Susanne	Richards	5
Gavette	Richardson Duncan	6
M. Q.	Riding	7
Jaime	Riley	8
Meka	Robinson	3
Rebecca	Rush	7
Dan	Schneckenburger	1
Nancy	Schwendeman	6
Alice	Settle-Raskin	4
Natalie	Shaw	5
Lorrie	Sigley	4
Amber	Starn	6
Matthew	Teffeau (Team #6 Leader)	6

Lindsay	Thompson (Team #5 Leader)	5
Heather	Tinelli	2
Bill	Valentine (Team #8 Leader)	8
Scott	Warner (Team #2 Leader)	2
Sandy	Washington	4
Carmella	Watkins	5
Shelby	Watson-Hampton	6
Ida	Watts-Harris	1
Dwight	Weingarten	2
Anthony	Williams	3
Lara	Wilson	4
Anthony	Woods	5
Darrin	Youker	6
Jianning	Zeng	1

Rural Maryland Day, Thursday, February 9, 2023

Megan: 667.458.9101 Charlotte: 301.371.8183	Team 1 - Zoom Breakout Room #1: Team Lead - Susan O'Neill	Team 2 - Zoom Breakout Room #2: Team Lead - Scott Warner	Team 3 - Zoom Breakout Room #3: Team Lead - John Hartline	Team 4 - Zoom Breakout Room #4: Team Lead - Josh Hastings	Team 5 - Zoom Breakout Room #5: Team Lead - Lindsay Thompson	Team 6 - Zoom Breakout Room #6: Team Lead - Matt Tefteau	Team 7 - Zoom Breakout Room #7: Team Lead - Steve McHenry	Team 8 - Zoom Breakout Room #8: Team Lead - Bill Valentine	Overflow
8:30AM	Briefing : Zoom Teleconference	Briefing : Zoom Teleconference	Briefing : Zoom Teleconference	Briefing : Zoom Teleconference	Briefing : Zoom Teleconference	Briefing : Zoom Teleconference	Briefing : Zoom Teleconference	Briefing : Zoom Teleconference	
9:00 AM	Delegate Mark Chang District 32, Anne Arundel County, Appropriations Committee	Delegate Kathy Szeliga District 7A, Baltimore County, Health and Government Operations Committee	Delegate Aletheia McCaskill, District 44B, Baltimore County Appropriations Committee		Delegate Jim Hinebaugh, District 1A, Allegany & Garrett Counties, Appropriations Committee	Senator Shelly Hettleman, District 11, Baltimore Cnty - Budget & Taxation Committee	Senator John Mautz, District 37, Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot & Wicomico Counties, Finance Committee		
9:15 AM				Delegate Lesley Lopez, District 39, Montgomery County, Health and Government Operations Committee			Senator Katherine Klausmeier, Baltimore County, District 8, Finance Committee	Delegate Jay Jacobs, District 36, Caroline, Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's, Environment and Transportation Committee	
9:30 AM	Delegate Nicholas Kipke, District 31, Anne Arundel County, Health and Government Operations Committee	Delegate Mark Edelson, District 46, Baltimore City, Appropriations Committee	Delegate Regina Boyce, District 43A, Baltimore City, Environment & Transportation Committee	Delegate Brian Chisholm, District 31, Anne Arundel County, Health and Government Operations Committee	Delegate Gabriel Acevero, District 39, Appropriations Committee	Delegate Natalie Ziegler, District 9A, Environment and Transportation Committee		Senator Corderman Staff Member, District 2, Frederick & Washington County, Budget and Taxation Committee	
9:45 AM									

10:00 AM	Senator Jack Bailey, Legislative Aide Anais Diebolt, District 29, Calvert & St. Mary's, Budget & Taxation Committee	Frederica, Chief of Staff for Senator Brian Feldman, District 15, Montgomery County, Education, Energy and the Environment Committee.							
10:15 AM									
10:30AM	Nina Wyckoff, Legislative Director for Senator Katie Fry Hester, District 9, Howard and Montgomery County, Education, Energy, Environment Comm.	Chief of Staff CJ for Senator Ron Watson, District 23, Prince George's County, Education, Energy, \$ the Environment Committee	Delegate Brooke Grossman, District 2B, Environment and Transportation Committee	Staff for Senator Pamela Beidle, District 32, Anne Arundel, Finance Committee					
10:45 AM						Delegate Michele Guyton, District 42B, Baltimore County, Enviro. & Transp. Committee	Delegate Chris Adams, District 37B, Caroline, Dorch, Talbot, Wic, Economic Matters Comm.		
11:00 AM	Craig Lewis Delegate Joshua Stonko Chief of Staff District 42C Appropriations Committee	Meet with Staff for Senator Justin Ready, Carroll County, District 5, Finance Committee	District 13 legislators/staff-Senator Guzzone (B&T), Delegate Atteerbeary, Lanman, Terrasa)	Senator Mary Beth Carozza, District 38, Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester, Education, Energy & Enviro. Comm.	Senator Johnny Ray Salling, District 6, Budget & Taxation Committee	Delegate Carl Anderton, District 38B, Appropriations Committee	Delegate Kirill Reznik, District 39, Appropriations Committee	Delegate Heather Bagnall, District 33, Health and Governement Committee	Delegate Teresa Reilly, District 35A, Health and Government Operations Committee
11:15 AM							Delegate Sheila Ruth, District 44B, Baltimore County, Environment & Transportation Comm.	Delegate Jared Solomon District 18 Appropriations Committee	
11:30 AM	Delegate Ken Kerr District 3, Frederick County, Health and Government Operations Committee	Delegate Joseline Pena-Malnyk District 21 Health and Government Operations Committee	Senator Melony Griffith, Meet w/ Chief of Staff Latisha K. Beal, District 25, PG County, Finance Committee.	Delegate Jamila Woods, District 26, Health and Government Appropriations Committee	Delegate Nino Mangione, District 42A, Appropriations Committee	Delegate Emily Shetty, District 18, Appropriations Committee	Delegate Ric Metzgar Cheif of Staff Paul Blitz, District 6, Appropriations Committee		

11:45 AM	Delegate Kevin Harris District 27A Appropriations Committee		Delegate Tom Hutchinson, District 37B, Health and Government Committee	Delegate Marc Korman (May send Chief of Staff), District 16, Appropriations Committee	Delegate Jennifer White, District 10, Health and Government Committee			Meet with Legislative Aid, Caroline Davenport for Delegate Anne Kaiser District 14 Health and Government Operations	
12:00pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Delegate Kumar Barve, District 17, Montgomery County, Environment and Transportation Committee	JB Jennings, District 7, Budget and Taxation Committee	Steve Hershey, District 36, Kent, Queen Anne's, Cecil, and Caroline, Finance Committee	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	
12:15pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	
12:30pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference	



Rural Maryland Council 2023 Legislative Priorities

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC), an independent state agency, brings together rural leaders, government officials at all levels, and the representatives of the non-profit and for-profit sectors to develop public policy solutions to the challenges unique to rural Maryland. Ultimately, our mission is to improve the quality of life while preserving the cultural heritage of Maryland’s rural communities.

The General Assembly Spending Affordability Committees December 2022 Interim Report states that the State’s revenues continue to benefit from pandemic-related federal aid and stronger than anticipated economic performance in recent years, placing the State in a strong fiscal position throughout the forecast period. Further the Committees interim report projects a \$1.4 billion structural surplus for fiscal year 2024. However, the current forecast reflects a diminishing structural balance over the five-year period as ongoing spending outpaces ongoing revenues and does not account for weakening economic conditions that could lead to a recession.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF): As Maryland recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the rural areas of the state continue to struggle to recover economically as reflected in unemployment and poverty rates. **To address these disparities, funding of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) remains a top priority.** Rural areas always see a delay in the impact and recovery of economic impacts and events. Our rural areas have not fully recovered from the last economic recession when the recent pandemic hit. It is important that rural areas receive the investments they need to recover at the same rate as the rest of Maryland. On average, in Fiscal Years 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 our grant programs have had 192 applicants requesting \$14,795,088. With our past funding, the RMC has funded on average 79 applicants at \$7,271,734 per year. **We respectfully ask for level funding of \$9 million in the Fiscal Year 2024 operating budget.**

For the Maryland General Assembly’s 2023 Legislative Session, the Rural Maryland Council supports the following legislative priorities:

Broadband and Infrastructure:

Infrastructure improvements remain a key piece of place making strategies in creating and retaining vibrancy in our rural communities including rural broadband expansion.

The Council looks to ease access to rights-of-way along public roadways. Rural Maryland remains slightly older in population and efforts and outreach should be made to address broadband affordability and adoptability to ensure digital inclusion of all Maryland residents. Requesting \$100 million in local government infrastructure funds.

The Council supports energy policies that promote long-term, locally generated, renewable energy. Funding in the amount of \$500,000 for the Wood Products Industry Equity Investment Fund (WPIEI) is included in MARBIDCO’s budget allowance.

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Priorities

The rural areas of the state continue to struggle to recover economically as reflected in unemployment and poverty rates.

	<p>Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$9,000,000 Supports entrepreneurship, infrastructure and health care
	<p>Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$167,000 Builds capacity of rural-serving nonprofits
	<p>Rural Maryland Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$750,000 Supports the Council’s staff, grant administration and event planning expenses
	<p>Regional Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$200,000 each for maintaining the current funding of the State’s five regional councils at the historic levels Support the Small, Women and Minority-Owned Business Account fund
	<p>MARBIDCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$5,235,000 for core programs, local farm enterprise and WPIEI grants, watermen’s and oyster shucking house loans \$10,000,000 for the Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program

Transportation: RMC also supports the distribution of transportation funding for Local Governments and expansion of heavy rail for commerce, transit, and tourism-related purposes. Non-emergency health care transportation is a concern as well as the repair and reconstruction of bridges across the state. The Council hosted three roundtables over the fall and participant consensus supported re-establishing and codifying the State’s Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation. We believe a new model of rural transit systems should be developed including utilizing smaller vehicles, relying on less fixed route coordination, more on demand services, and access to additional resources.

Rural Economic Development: The Council supports efforts to encourage rural economic development in the form of tax credits to new or expanding businesses in rural Maryland. This includes tax credits for broadband expansion, services and a sales tax exemption of broadband equipment, and income tax credit for angel investments. These initiatives will attract and expand industry sectors other than cyber and biotechnology to all jurisdictions across the state, in part encouraging needed investment in the rural counties of Maryland.

Rural Workforce Development: The Council supports apprenticeships and community colleges so young adults can stay in their rural areas and become part of the rural workforce. Efforts to improve career and technology education through implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, including specifically agriculture education.

Viable Agriculture, Aquaculture, Forestry & Rural Communities: Agriculture remains Maryland’s largest commercial economic sector and is incredibly important to our rural areas. Agriculture contributes approximately \$16.5 billion to the state economy supported 73,009 jobs and added nearly \$610 million in combined state and local tax revenue. The total economic impact of resource-based industries in 2022 equaled \$20.1 billion, supported over 88,610 jobs, and generated over \$755 million in state and local tax revenue. RMC supports programs and policies that will sustain and enhance agricultural production and agritourism. RMC also supports policies that build strong rural communities:

- Adequate funding to ensure the retention and placement of University of Maryland Extension (College Park and Princess Anne) agricultural agents in each county and provide for appropriate agricultural research;
- Adequate funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund;
- Land preservation programs such as Program Open Space which funds Rural Legacy and the Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation;
- Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to ensure low-income workers and families access to basic necessities and providing an economic boost to neighborhood businesses;
- Core Smart Growth programs such as the Maryland Heritage Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit, Maryland Heritage Area Grants, and the Community Investment Tax Credit; and
- Expanded funding for the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Community Legacy, Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund; Neighborhood Business Works and Rental Housing Works programs.

RMC is also interested in nutrient management regulations and land use decisions that may adversely impact agriculture production, particularly in regard to the expansion of utility-scale solar arrays without local input. The Council opposes any tax or fee imposed on agricultural products such as poultry.

Public Safety: Small rural volunteer fire and emergency agencies find it difficult to recruit and retain qualified trainees and employees. Efforts should be considered that allows rural emergency services access to workforce development tools.

Rural Health: Rural Maryland currently experiences a shortage of health care providers particularly in primary care, specialty areas, mental health, and dental care. Moreover, rural populations are also overall older and in worst health than their suburban counterparts. RMC supports efforts to enable and expand telehealth to provide access to preventative, socio-behavioral and critical care services in rural areas.

For more information, visit the RMC’s website at: rural.maryland.gov

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Rural Maryland Day
February 9, 2023

Talking Points

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Priorities

The rural areas of the state continue to struggle to recover economically as reflected in unemployment and poverty rates.



Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund

- \$9,000,000
- Supports entrepreneurship, infrastructure and health care



Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund

- \$167,000
- Builds capacity of rural-serving nonprofits



Rural Maryland Council

- \$750,000
- Supports the Council's staff, grant administration and event planning expenses



Regional Councils

- \$200,000 each for maintaining the current funding of the State's five regional councils at the historic levels
- Support the Small, Women and Minority-Owned Business Account fund



MARBIDCO

- \$5,235,000 for core programs, local farm enterprise and WPIEI grants, watermen's and oyster shucking house loans
- \$10,000,000 for the Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program

Support for The Budget

The Rural Maryland Council has received an unprecedented **\$9 million dollars** in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget and this funding will be crucial to help organizations across the rural areas of our State as we enter our upcoming grant season. The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) is designed to facilitate significant targeted investments in important economic and community development programs, promote regional and intergovernmental cooperation, and provides funding for the five Regional Councils. The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) provides capacity building grants to rural serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges that promote statewide and regional planning, health care, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education. In FY23, the Council awarded 84 Grants for a total of \$8,369,629.

- **SB181/HB200: Budget Bill (Fiscal Year 2024):** The Council Supports the funding for both of its grant programs, which includes \$9,046,194 for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) and, \$118,485 for the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistant Fund (MAERDAF). In addition to the funding for the grant programs, the Council also supports the \$5,235,000 in funding for the Maryland Agricultural and Resource–Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO), as well as \$5,444,127 for the Rural Legacy Program.



Rural Maryland Day
February 9, 2023

***SUPPORT \$9,000,000
IN FUNDING FOR RURAL MARYLAND PROSPERITY INVESTMENT
FUND***

Rural Maryland has the State's:

- Highest unemployment rates
- Highest poverty levels
- Lacks transportation options
- Lacks health care providers
- Lack of internet and broadband services

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund:

- Legislated in 2006
- Targeted investments to regional, nonprofit, and education
- Funded for the seventh time for Fiscal Year 2023
 - Awarded 84 grants totaling approximately \$8,369,629
- **We thank Governor Moore for including \$9,046,194 for RMPIF in the FY2024 budget**

The requested **\$9,000,000** in funding will support the following:

- Rural Maryland Council Operations - **\$750,000**
- Economic development in rural areas
 - Regional councils - **\$3,000,000**
- Infrastructure improvement projects - **\$1,500,000**
 - Broadband connectivity
 - Upgrades for water and wastewater treatment facilities
 - Improved access to transportation
 - Workforce housing
 - Commercial/industrial facility upgrades
- Entrepreneurship programs including - **\$1,500,000**
 - Business training classes at our community colleges
 - Business plan competitions
 - Revolving loan funds
- Health care programs - **\$1,500,000**
 - Recruitment and retention of health care providers
 - Improving access to health and dental care, and mental and behavioral health



SUPPORT HB695 – RURAL MARYLAND PROSPERITY INVESTMENT FUND – REVISIONS AND SUNSET REPEAL (RURAL COMMUNITIES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2023)

RMC is seeking technical updates to the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). These updated include the following:

- Removes the 2030 sunset for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund
- Replaces ‘may’ with ‘shall’ for the Governor to include an appropriation of at least \$1,000,000 to the Rural Maryland Prosperity Fund
- Clarifies that only State recognized rural regional councils are eligible for RMPIF
- Adds Cooperative Development and Workforce Development as focus areas under Rural Entrepreneurship and Agricultural Development
- Updates the hold harmless clause to match what the Council currently receives.
- Includes text that the Executive Committee must concur with any reallocations of grant funds from one fund to the other.



Rural Maryland Day
February 9, 2023

SUPPORT FOR BROADBAND EXPANSION

The Rural Maryland Council supports the efforts to expand broadband access across the state, to close the digital divide and to provide adequate and reliable internet services to Marylanders. Having access to fast and reliable internet has become increasingly essential over the past several years. Other services such as telehealth visits have also become more popular during this time, allowing patients to have medical examinations administered from the safety of their homes.

Capital Budget Items:

- \$91,030,000 for public school construction and includes grants to local board of education for federal E-rate-eligible special construction such as fiber and broadband infrastructure projects.
- \$65,000,000 for the Supplemental Capital Grant Program for Local School Systems under the Maryland State Department of Education.
- Anticipating \$100 Million in Federal Funds under the Broadband, Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) program. However, these funds are not accounted for in the FY2024 Capital or Operating Budget. RMC is asking for a placeholder for these federal funds to ensure once the funds are available, they can be used as quickly as possible.

RMC Supports:

- **SB547/HB551: Broadband Expansion Incentive Act of 2023:** This bill allows a subtraction modification under the Maryland income tax for certain qualified broadband grants awarded during the taxable year for broadband deployment; and providing an exemption from the sales and use tax for the sale of certain equipment related to providing Internet service and deploying broadband.
- **SB408/HB442: Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Qualified Broadband Grants.** This bill allows a subtraction modification under the Maryland income tax for federal, State, or local grants for broadband infrastructure awarded during the taxable year for broadband deployment.
- **Closing the Digital Divide – Connecting Every Maryland Resident.** The State of Maryland has been a leader in making the needed investments into statewide broadband infrastructure. Most recently, the General Assembly and the prior administration allocated \$400 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding (FY 2021-2023) to support the

construction of broadband capital infrastructure as well as operating dollars to support internet adoption programs to help close the digital divide.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will provide at least \$100 million for broadband infrastructure through a program known as BEAD, which stands for Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment. None of this funding is reflected yet in the budget.

The Need

A funding and programming gap still exists to address the historical and persistent issues of digital equity and inclusion within the State.

Solutions

- Create and fund a State Digital Equity Office within the Office of Statewide Broadband located in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. (Legislative Sample attached.)
- Fund broadband adoption, navigator, and digital skills training programs (to be coordinated and grant funded by the State Digital Equity Office) - \$10 million for both the office & programming.
- Develop and fund a Rural Municipal Digital Equity Pilot program (\$200,000)



Rural Maryland Day
February 10, 2022

Support For Healthcare and Telehealth

Rural Maryland is currently experiencing a shortage in healthcare providers, particularly in specialty areas, mental health and dental. In addition to having a lack of healthcare providers, Rural Marylanders tend to be both older and in worst health than their suburban counterparts. Telehealth has allowed for easier access, as well as more access for those who were originally unable to access the proper healthcare professional, because of a lack of healthcare providers in their area, or for other reasons such as transportation. Additionally, RMC supports the Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023. During the fall 2022, RMC and the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland conducted three roundtable discussions between healthcare and transportation providers to determine how non-emergency health transportation can be improved in the State. The purpose was to create a dialogue between the industries and the goal was to identify strategies that could be applied to Maryland Communities.

The Rural Maryland Council supports efforts to enable and expand telehealth, tax credits for preceptors should also be expanded to include physicians' assistants, and health and human services transportation.

RMC Supports:

- **SB0511/HB596: Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023.** This bill will Establishing the Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Program for hospitals to coordinate transportation provided by a nonprofit organization to or from medical services for eligible individuals; repealing a certain cap on the amount of grants that may be awarded by the Maryland Transit Administration under the Maryland Senior Rides Program; requiring the Governor to provide \$1,000,000 annually for the Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Program in the State budget beginning in fiscal year 2025.
- **SB534: Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2023.** This bill extends the Access Act to June 30, 2025, the inclusion of certain audio-only telephone conversations under the definition of "telehealth" for the purpose of certain provisions of law relating to reimbursement and coverage of telehealth by the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations.
- **SB439/HB475: Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact.** This bill allows for entering into the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Compact; establishing criteria for participating states; authorizing an advanced practice registered nurse to practice in a party state under certain scope of practice rules; establishing the Interstate

Commission of APRN Compact Administrators and its duties and powers; providing for the amendment of and withdrawal from the Compact; and providing the Compact is contingent on the enacting of substantially similar legislation in six other states.



Rural Maryland Day
February 9, 2023

SUPPORT RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Council supports efforts to encourage rural economic development in the form of tax credits to new or expanding businesses.

RMC Supports:

- **SB418/HB592: Property Tax-Agricultural Land and Improvements – Assessment.** This bill provides that value-added agricultural activities are a farm or agricultural use of land for assessment purposes; creating a subclass of real property consisting of improvements on an actively used farm that support value-added agricultural activities; requiring improvements on an actively used farm that support value-added agricultural activities to be assessed at the agricultural use rate.
- **SB497/HB178: State Designations – State Spirit – Maryland Rye.** This bill designates Maryland Rye or Maryland Rye Whiskey as the State spirit.
- **HB552: Economic Development – Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program and Fund (Innovation Economy Infrastructure Act of 2023).** This bill will establish the Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program in the Department of Commerce to provide funding for certain costs for infrastructure projects in eligible technology sectors; requiring certain grantees to provide matching funds and to demonstrate certain abilities; and establishing the Build Our Future Grant Fund as a continuing, non-lapsing fund.
- **SB0034/HB389: Department of Agriculture – State Specialist for Value-Added Agriculture.** This bill establishes the State Ombudsman for Value-Added Agriculture as a position in the Department of Agriculture. The Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee voted the bill out favorable with amendment this week.
- **SB386/ HB63: Certified Local Farm and Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Program - Establishment.** This bill will alter the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program to be the Certified Local Farm and Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Program; expanding the purpose of the Program to include food from certified Chesapeake invasive species providers in the overall percentage goal for certain procurement contracts; and altering the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund to be the Certified Local Farm and Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Food Aggregation Grant Fund.



Rural Maryland Day
February 9, 2023

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

RMC Supports:

- **HB547: Family Prosperity Act of 2023.** This bill alters the percentage of the federal earned income tax credit used for determining the amount that an individual may claim as a refund under the Maryland earned income tax credit under certain circumstances; repealing a certain limitation on the amount certain individuals may claim as a refund under the credit; altering the definition of "qualified child" and income eligibility requirements for purposes of qualifying for a certain credit against the State income tax for certain dependent children.



SUPPORT FUNDING FOR AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

RMC Supports:

- **SB124/HB32: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.** This bill establishes that the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council is in the Office of Resilience in the Maryland Department of Emergency Management; and altering the process for electing a cochair of the Council.
- **HB152 Department of Agriculture - Urban Agriculture Grant Fund.** This bill alters the purpose and contents of and the requirements and qualifications under the Urban Agriculture Grant Fund; requiring the Governor in each of Fiscal years 2025,2026,2027,2028, and 2029 to include \$250,000 for the Fund in the annual budget bill; and altering the membership of the Review Board established to implement the grant application process that prioritizes applications that benefit socially disadvantaged urban farmers.
- **SB386/ HB63: Certified Local Farm and Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Program-Establishment.** This bill will alter the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program to be the Certified Local Farm and Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Program; expanding the purpose of the Program to include food from certified Chesapeake invasive species providers in the overall percentage goal for certain procurement contracts; and altering the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund to be the Certified Local Farm and Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Food Aggregation Grant Fund.
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MARBIDCO



Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) is a nimble quasi-public economic development financial intermediary organization chartered by the State of Maryland and headquartered in Annapolis. Its mission is to help Maryland’s (typically small and family-owned) farm, forestry, and seafood businesses to prosper through the provision of targeted financial and other services that helps retain existing resource-based industry production and commerce, promote rural entrepreneurship, and nurture emerging or expanding agricultural enterprises.

MARBIDCO is committed to supporting the sustainability of the state’s agricultural, forestry, and seafood businesses, most of which are family-run enterprises, while at the same time helping to ensure the viability of the rural working landscape that Marylanders so greatly cherish. A safe and healthy local food supply, clean air and water, thriving rural communities, and productive pastoral scenic vistas are what we plan to help sustain for future generations.

MARBIDCO’s Core Programs in the State Budget:

> \$2,300,000 (level-funded) - for collateralized loans mostly, but also funds some small grants.



Maryland Resource-Based Industry Financing Fund (MRBIFF) offers low-interest loans to Ag/RBI-industry enterprises for the purchase of land and capital equipment for production and processing activities (including building construction).

Agri-Business Equipment and Working Capital Loan Fund offers moderate-cost loans to Ag/RBI-industry firms and producers (including farmers) for working capital and equipment purchases. between \$15,000 and \$100,000 in size.



Maryland Vineyard/Hops/Orchard Fruit Planting Loan Fund offers moderate-interest loans to help meet the unique financing needs of Maryland’s landowners wanting to plant fruit-bearing vines and trees. The maximum loan amount is \$100,000, and an interest-only option is available for a period of two to three years, depending on the crop.

Maryland Urban Agriculture Commercial Lending Incentive Grant Program, offered with partial matching support of Farm Credit, is designed to meet the financing needs of urban farmers by providing an incentive for them to seek commercial lender financing for the development or expansion of their agricultural enterprises. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available for commercial farming businesses.

MARBIDCO’s Specialty Programs in the State Budget:

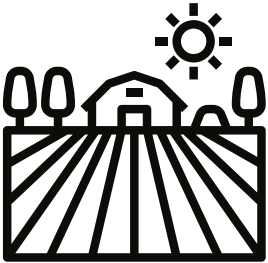
> Certified Local Farm Food Aggregation Grant Program (level-funded as mandated) – \$435,000 for projects that support wholesale and institutional market development for locally grown food products.



Certified Local Farm Food Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund Program supports the development of local food aggregation infrastructure in Maryland to help meet current and future wholesale and institutional market demand for locally produced food products and to help support a new procurement goal for State agencies and universities to purchase at least 20% of their food from Maryland Certified Local Farm Enterprises.



MARBIDCO



MARBIDCO’s Specialty Programs in the State Budget continued:

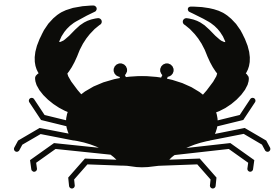
- > **Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program (funded as newly mandated) – \$10,000,000 for both versions of the combination beginner farmer land access and farmland preservation program thus accelerating four years of funding into one year.**
- > **MARBIDCO requests that up to \$6,000,000 of this amount be transferred to Core Loan Programs due to the high demand for these programs today because of currently very high commercial interest rates.**

Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program (“Next Gen Program”) enables MARBIDCO, working with commercial lenders, and farmland conservation programs to assist beginning farmers with down-payment funding for the purchase of farmland of 50 acres or more, while at the same time effectively extinguishing the development rights on the farmland being purchased. (Program uses an easement option purchase contract.)

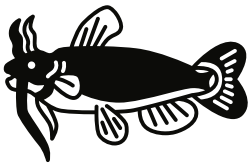
Small Acreage Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program (“SANG”) targets young and beginning farmers wishing to purchase 10- to 49-acre farms. MARBIDCO purchases the permanent conservation easement at settlement.

- > **Maryland Watermen’s Microloan Program (level-funded as mandated) – \$500,000 for small loans to help generational watermen (and eventually beginner watermen) to purchase needed equipment.**

Maryland Watermen’s Microloan Program offers loans to assist “generational watermen” with the purchase of needed equipment via low-interest, unsecured loans between \$7,000 and \$15,000 in size.



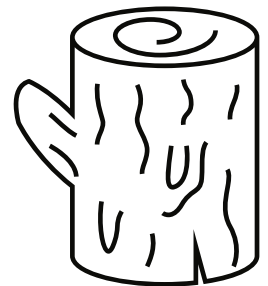
- > **Livestock Processing Equipment Grant Program (level-funded) – \$500,000 for meat processing capacity enhancement at the smaller USDA-inspected facilities in Maryland.**



MARBIDCO hopes to leverage a USDA Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program Grant this year to assist with the expansion of livestock processing capacity in Maryland. This program will offer loans to eligible applicants to help purchase equipment and/or upgrade small-and medium-sized facilities located in the state in order to increase the processing of large animals and invasive blue catfish at USDA- inspected facilities.

- > **Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Incentive Program (level-funded) – \$500,000 for grants for the sustainable forestry sector of Maryland’s economy and the State’s land resource base of 2.5 million acres that directly and indirectly supports wood production in Maryland (part of an effort to jumpstart the “Maryland Forestry Economic Adjustment Strategy” implementation.)**

The Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Investment Program (WP/IEI) provides stimulus for forest products-related businesses to grow through innovation, increased production, and new market opportunities. The program offers a 25% matching grant of up to \$50,000 for equipment or facilities improvements. Forestry is a \$3.3 billion industry in Maryland.



- > **NEW: Oyster Shucking House Loan Program (funded as mandated) – \$1,000,000 to provide loans to finance the cost of eligible seafood processing projects, including historic oyster shucking facilities, in order to increase the amount of oyster shells retained in the state and returned to the Chesapeake Bay.**

**Rural Maryland
Council**

Charlotte Davis, co-
Chair

**Chesapeake
Conservancy**

Joel Dunn, co-Chair

**Baltimore County
Land Trust Alliance**

Ann Jones

**The Conservation
Fund**

Bill Crouch

**Lower Shore Land
Trust**

Kate Patton

Grow and Fortify

Kelly Dudeck

**Trust for Public
Land**

Kent Whitehead

**Maryland League of
Conservation Voters**

Kristen Harbeson

**Southern Maryland
National Heritage
Area**

Lucille Walker

**Chesapeake Bay
Commission**

Mark Hoffman

**The Nature
Conservancy**

Michelle Dietz

**Preservation
Maryland**

Nick Redding

**Scenic Rivers Land
Trust**

Sarah Knebel

**Maryland
Association of
County Parks and
Recreation
Administrators**

Jessica Leys

**Eastern Shore Land
Conservancy**

Steve Kline

Forever Maryland

Wendy Stringfellow

What is Program Open Space?

Established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1969, Program Open Space is a suite of conservation programs that support state and local parks, preserve agricultural and natural lands, support historic preservation and heritage tourism, and help communities provide playgrounds, ball fields, trails, and other recreational opportunities.

The suite of programs includes: a.) Program Open Space; b.) the Rural Legacy Program; c.) the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation; and d.) the Maryland Heritage Areas Program. Together, these programs enhance and protect quality of life for all Marylanders.

How is Program Open Space funded?

Funding for Program Open Space is generated by a 0.5% tax on real property transfers in Maryland. This innovative tax policy balances the growth of real estate and development with the protection of open space and recreation opportunities.

Why is Program Open Space important?

Protecting nature: Statewide, Program Open Space has helped to protect more than 399,000 acres of land from development (source: [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#)), and an additional 112,000 acres have been protected through the Rural Legacy Program. These protected areas provide wildlife habitat, protect rivers and streams, provide clean air, and enhance the state's resilience against climate change.

Supporting state and local parks: Program Open Space directly supports state and local parks by protecting land to expand public access to parks and by providing funding for local park development in order to improve local recreation opportunities.

Preserving agricultural land: The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) has helped conserve 340,253 acres as farmland (source: [Maryland Department of Agriculture](#)). From 2001 to 2016, an estimated 102,700 acres of farmland were converted for development (source: [American Farmland Trust](#)).

Preserving Maryland history and heritage: The Maryland Heritage Areas program supports local heritage tourism in 13 Heritage Areas. Maryland Heritage Areas attract more than 20 million visitors each year, resulting in a \$2.4 billion annual economic value statewide.

What does this mean for my community?

Public health: Parks and open space provide Marylanders the opportunity to recreate. Parks have been particularly important and highly demanded as a venue for safe recreation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Protected forested areas ensures water quality and air quality are protected.

Economic resilience: Parks, natural areas, and open space increase property values and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, a significant and growing sector of Maryland's economy. Maryland farms and forests are an important part of Maryland's rural economies. Heritage Areas support local tourism in every county of Maryland.

Quality of life: Program Open Space contributes to a healthy environment, it creates places for recreation, it preserves farms (a local source for food), and it strengthens communities by helping to celebrate history and heritage. Program Open Space improves quality of life in Maryland.



FOREVER
MARYLAND

Enhancing and Advancing Land Conservation

Statement of Public Policy Values

Forever Maryland is dedicated to the conservation of our state's land, water, wildlife, and other natural resources. Everyone who lives or works in Maryland, or who visits Maryland, should have the opportunity to experience and cherish these invaluable natural treasures that sustain healthy, vibrant, and economically resilient communities.

There is no room in our work on behalf of the people of Maryland for racism, injustice, or acts of exclusion. The principles and values of equality, justice, and inclusion guide us and will be honored by Forever Maryland in all that we do.

2023 Forever Maryland State Legislative Agenda

- Support **Full cash funding of Maryland's Program Open Space** and implementation of the Maryland Great Outdoors Act
- Support **SB470/HB631 - Maryland the Beautiful "40X40" Conservation Bill** as a way to dramatically increase the conservation of Maryland's precious lands and habitat, including:
 - **Setting a goal to protect 30% of Maryland land by 2030 and 40% by 2040;**
 - **Creating a new *Land Trust Rapid Response Revolving Loan Fund Program*;**
 - **Supporting the implementation of 40X40; and**
 - **Adding to the Maryland the Beautiful grant program with two new pots of funding to help address lands facing invasive species or climate change related threats**
- Support the creation of an **Greenspace Equity Program (HB 503)** to help transform urban greenspaces through expanding greenspace opportunities and improving the health of the land
- Support **making the Community Solar program permanent** while advancing solar siting in a way that preserves Maryland's precious natural resources and working landscapes
- Support the **2023 Climate Resilience Investment Act** to ensure Maryland's vital lands and wildlife are protected and supported, while communities prepare to adapt to the effects of climate change
- Support **Full Funding for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) and Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF)** under the Rural Maryland Council, to support conservation oriented non-profit organizations



Advocacy Priorities for 2023

- Prevent unnecessary **evictions and foreclosures**
- Prevent **tax sale foreclosures** statewide
- **Infrastructure investments** including transportation and broadband statewide
- Continue **affordable housing** production, preservation, and repair
- **Support non-profits** by ensuring they have necessary **operating support** to survive and flexibility to provide needed services.

Focus on

- Community Development Fund - Operating Funds for Nonprofits - SB643
- Investment in affordable housing is an investment in health, economic development, and education.

DHCD Budget	FY23 Budget	Proposed FY24	CDN Recommendation
Emergency Rental Assistance	\$400+ million	\$0	\$175 million
Community Legacy	\$8 million	\$6 million GF	\$8 million
Main Street	\$1 million	\$1 million	\$1 million
Rental Housing Programs Rental Housing Works Rental Housing Fund Emerging Developers Fund	\$141 MILLION	\$48 million GF	\$150 MILLION
MD Housing Counseling Fund	\$2.7 million	\$2.5 million GF	\$3 million

The mission of the Community Development Network of MD is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland’s urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.