



MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FUND

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2022



Cover photos courtesy of the following grantees - Maritime Museum, Chesapeake Housing Mission, Inc., Preservation Maryland, Evergreen Heritage Center, STEAM Onward, LEAD Maryland Foundation, and Adkins Arboretum.

MAERDAF Overview

The Maryland Agriculture Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) grant funding provides capacity-building funds to rural nonprofit service providers. The cap for this grant program in Fiscal Year 2022 was \$40,000 and while a match is not required, it is highly preferred. The MAERDAF program is funded through the State of Maryland’s Annual Operating Budget. In Fiscal Year 2022, the MAERDAF budget received \$118,485 (PCA 39101) in its line-item appropriations and \$500,000 from RMPHF (PCA 38101), totaling \$618,485. Due to the high demand in MAERDAF grant applications, the Grant Review Board approved an additional allocation of \$292,303 from RMPHF for a total of \$910,788 in MAERDAF grant awards.

MAERDAF History

MAERDAF was established in 2000 with the purpose 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. This grant has the following four focus areas: Agriculture & Forestry, Community & Economic Development, Rural Broadband, Energy, and Youth engagement.

MAERDAF Grant Review Board

The Rural Maryland Council serves as the administrative agency in receiving the applications and disbursing the funds. Grant award determinations are made by the independent MAERDAF Grant Review Board set by law and consisting of the Secretaries (or their designee) of the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Health, Housing and Community Development and Natural Resources as well as the Chair (or the designee) of the Rural Maryland Council. Decisions by the MAERDAF Grant Review Board are final and binding.

Fiscal Year 2022 Grant Review Board Members-MAKE INTO paragraph.

- **Mindie Burgoyne**, Senior Regional Business Development Representative, Commerce
- **Karen Fedor**, Senior Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Maryland Department of Agriculture
- **Dan Rider**, Forest Stewardship & Utilization Program Manager, Maryland Department of Natural Resource Forest Service
- **Sara Seitz**, Director, State Office of Rural Health, Maryland Department of Health
- **Dona Sorce**, Project Manager, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
- **Helen Wernecke**, Rural Maryland Chair Designee
- MAERDAF Coordinator, **Charlotte Davis**, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council

MAERDAF Fiscal Year 2022 Awards At-A-Glance

MAERDAF Regions Served	
Eastern Shore (Nine County Region-Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset)	12 Awards
Southern (Three County Region-Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's)	1 Award
Western (Five County Region-Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, Carroll)	8 Awards
Statewide (Eighteen County Region)	9 Awards
Total:	30 Awards

MAERDAF	Amount	# of Grants
Ag & Forestry	\$133,140	6
Energy	\$62,000	2
Youth Engagement	\$107,015	3
Community & Economic Development	\$608,633	19
Total:	\$910,788	30

Agriculture & Forestry - 6 Grant Award Projects Totaling \$133,140

Allegany College of Maryland

Amount Awarded: \$40,000

Project Name: Growing Workforce Roots in Rural Western Maryland: Enhancing Forestry Education at Allegany College of Maryland

Focus Area: Agriculture & Forestry

Project Summary - Allegany College of Maryland serves Western Maryland and the surrounding region to deliver a diverse and relevant education centered around student success in a supportive and engaging community. The College offers a *Society of American Foresters* (SAF) accredited forestry program (the only SAF-accredited Forest Technology Program in the state of Maryland) that teaches students the latest techniques and utilizes industry standard equipment for felling operations. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, will be used to purchase a log loader. A log loader lifts-and-swings logs from side-to-side, in a progression that moves logs or whole trees from the stump to a roadside landing. The addition of this technology will significantly enhance the existing technical training opportunities for forestry applications at ACM and will greatly benefit rural western Maryland. *Grantees have been approved a 3-month extension due to chain supply issues. The log loader has been ordered and delivery is expected by the end of September.*

Chesapeake Culinary Center

Amount Awarded - \$13,000

Project Name - Eat the Invader: extracting blue catfish to feed the hungry/ institutions

Focus Area - Agriculture & Forestry

Project Summary - The Chesapeake Culinary Center's mission is to create healthy economically stable families; address poverty through food, education and economic development; to give community members the tools to be self-sustaining and successful; provide building opportunities for their community's children to eat healthier so they are ready to learn; and, to create opportunities for job skills and economic development to address poverty on the eastern shore through job creation and value add for farmers. Working with partners, the Center designed a plan of action to help extract the invasive blue catfish from the Chesapeake Bay while identifying the marketing plan to create consumer demand. The blue catfish is considered an invasive species because they negatively affect the Bay ecosystem by eating so many native species. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay for consultant services to create the plan of action, conduct a survey, and related project materials.

LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.

Amount Awarded - \$30,000

Project Name - Gaining Leadership for Maryland's Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Rural Communities

Focus Area - Agriculture & Forestry

Project Summary - LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. is dedicated to identifying and developing leadership to serve agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities in Maryland. The new LEAD Maryland Class XII Fellows (2022-23) will participate in a series of seminars beginning in January 2022. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay for three LEAD Class XII seminars held in Frederick County, Southern Maryland, and Dorchester County. Seminar costs include lodging and meals per Fellow, transportation, training, and teaching supplies.

Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation

Amount Awarded - \$10,390

Project Name - Infusing Agriculture in the Middle School Classroom

Focus Area - Agriculture & Forestry

Project Summary - The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc. (MAEF) promotes the understanding and importance of agriculture in our daily lives and is striving to address this situation by making teachers more literate in agriculture. *Infusing Agriculture into the Middle School Classroom* program debuted in a modified format in 2021 due to the pandemic. This innovative course allows in-depth online study, chat room and an in-person workshop/farm experience to increase depth of knowledge by allowing teachers hands-on activities and interactive farm tours. The goal is to have teachers develop a comfort level with agriculture concepts in order to integrate lessons learned into basic curriculum requirements in all subject areas. The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were expended to rebuild the course for post-pandemic semesters going forward into the academic years 2021-2022 by paying for a) the salaries and wages for Foundation Staff; b) travel; c) the Goucher College course fee; and d) rental for an in-person session.

Steam Onward Inc**Amount Awarded - \$13,450****Project Name - MORE THAN FARMING****Focus Area - Agriculture & Forestry**

Project Summary - STEAM Onward's mission is to increase the number of minority and under-served youth pursuing higher education in STEM related fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were utilized to produce and distribute statewide, a pre-collegiate documentary video series called "More Than Farming" (MTF). The MTF video series features farms and natural resources sites in rural Maryland that utilize 21st century precision technology and tools being utilized in agriculture, aquaculture, and natural resources. The grant award was expended to include contractual services for the a) the Project Director; b) the Videographer and equipment; c) the Video Editor; d) Interviewers; e) food for video shooting events; and, f) promotion materials, and web related services.

Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council**Amount Awarded - \$26,300****Project Name - Western Maryland Food Resiliency Project****Focus Area – Community & Economic Development**

Project Summary - The Western Maryland Food Council (WMFC) serves Garrett, Allegany and Washington counties. The Council assists organizations with planning and implementing food system projects by bringing organizations together to discuss and plan projects. The Council is made up of 14 individuals with a variety of backgrounds from the three counties. The WMFC has identified four main needs in the region: 1) communication between farmers & restaurants, 2) greater information about community gardens, 3) a better understanding of agricultural education in the region, and 4) an understanding of the needs of food pantries & more coordination of the local food system. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to hire a full-time individual for 6 months to complete the following items: a) a Farmer to Restaurant Forum; b) a directory of community gardens and resources; c) a directory of agricultural education resources; and, d) conduct a survey of food pantries.

Community & Economic Development - 19 Grant Award Projects Totaling \$608,633**Bay Community Support Services, Inc.****Amount Awarded - \$27,200****Project Name - Construction & Renovation of Group Homes for the Disabled in Two Rural Counties****Focus Area - Community & Economic Development**

Project Summary - Bay Community Support Services provides personalized services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in Southern and Central Maryland. The MAERDAF grant award was used to aid in the home repairs of three residential group homes located in Charles and St. Mary's counties. These houses are full-time homes to 13 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, seven (7) of whom are wheelchair-bound, and a work location for 30 employees. One of the three homes is a full-care residential home, meaning every resident is wheelchair-bound and has numerous preexisting health concerns. Repairs completed included a total roof replacement, window replacement of two homes (34 windows total), and reconstruction and plumbing in two homes due to water and mold remediation from water damage in the bathroom.

Beach to Bay Heritage Area**Amount Awarded - \$40,000****Project Name - African American Heritage in the Beach to Bay Heritage Area****Focus Area - Community & Economic Development**

Project Summary - The Beach to Bay Heritage Area's mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the historical, cultural, and natural heritage of Maryland's Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties. This project focused on creating and adding to existing African American Heritage assets on the lower eastern shore including the addition of interpretive signs, a self-guided driving tour brochure and a mural depicting Reverend Charles Albert Tindley, known as the father of gospel music in Crisfield, Maryland. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to purchase a) 4 interpretive sign designs and their fabrication; b) the creation of 25 aluminum QR Code signs; c) the muralist; and, d) project publications, marketing, and technology related to website update and social media content.

Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc.

Amount Awarded - \$40,000

Project Name - Heritage at Work: Blacksmithing Returns to Catoctin Furnace

Focus Area - Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - The Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc. works to study, commemorate, and preserve the unique and rich history of this late 18th through 19th-century industrial village through the preservation of architecture, art and artistry, cultural traditions, cultural landscape, lifeways, and foodways of the diverse workers. This project will aid in the reconstruction of the historic village smithy in Catoctin Furnace where blacksmithing began with African American ironworkers and blacksmiths in 1776. The completed shop will add blacksmithing to their successful 9-year-old leadership-focused "Heritage at Work" which will enhance students' technical abilities & practical skills including good hand-to-eye coordination, problem-solving skills, math skills for measuring, making precise cuts and calculations, creative and design skills, and interpersonal skills. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to construct the timber framed blacksmith shop, which included milling, joinery, excavation, foundation, construction of the hearth/chimney, siding and trim, framing, and assembly. *Grantee was approved a 6-month extension as they were having trouble getting the metal roofing material for the shop. The project is scheduled to be completed by December 30, 2022.*

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

Amount Awarded - \$34,535

Project Name - CBMM Shipwright Apprentice Program

Focus Area – Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (CBMM) is dedicated to preserving and exploring the history, environment, and culture of the entire Chesapeake Bay region, and making this resource available to all. CBMM has been operating a successful Shipwright Apprentice Program for more than twenty years, graduating more than fifty apprentices. In 2018, CBMM began offering a formal four-year apprentice certification, developed in line with U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration standards, and registered with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program, a division of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's Workforce Development and Adult Learning. CBMM's four-year Shipwright Apprentice Program covers 8,000 hours of real work experiences, including instruction and training on joinery techniques, ship layout, ship repair, and construction, as well as leadership and management skill development. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the stipends for four apprentices and the salary and wages for the lead Shipwright Educator.

Chesapeake Housing Mission Inc.

Amount Awarded - \$30,000

Project Name - Healthy Homes Initiative

Focus Area – Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - Chesapeake Housing Mission Inc.'s mission is to provide critical home repair services through Christian Mission to low-income families living in the Chesapeake Region as well as provide transformational life experiences to those we serve, volunteers offering their service, and entire communities. Their Healthy Home Initiative provides critical housing repair services to low-income persons living on the Lower Shore. These repairs help make clients' homes warmer, safer, drier, and healthier, decreasing the risk of falls, emergency room visits and hospitalizations. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay for home repairs to twenty homes and covered the cost for project materials and supplies that included lumber, hardware, drywall, flooring, roofing materials and other supplies needed for home repair job/ramp builds.

Community Mediation Maryland

Amount Awarded - \$40,000

Project Name - Community Mediation Corps - Rural Mediation Centers Only

Focus Area – Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - Community Mediation Maryland's (CMM) mission it to advance collaborative conflict resolution in Maryland through educating the public, providing training and quality assurance, conducting research, and creatively applying mediation to social challenges. This project focused on placing seven full-time AmeriCorps members in community mediation centers in

(*Community Mediation Maryland continued*) in rural counties throughout Maryland. Rural Maryland mediation centers tend to be smaller with less opportunity for growth and placement of a full-time member to serve can significantly increase the number of services provided benefiting the community they serve. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support seven Americorps member stipends to serve 1 year in rural area mediation centers across the State.

Evergreen Heritage Center Foundation

Amount Awarded - \$25,000

Project Name - The Evergreen Farm and its Appalachian Coal Camp

Focus Area - Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - The Evergreen Heritage Center - a 130 acre Farm for education, conservation, and preservation - serving Garrett and Allegany Counties, established an Appalachian Coal Camp experience with the MAERDAF grant award funds. The project is part of an effort to rebuild the Evergreen Coal Camp and tell the story of the symbiotic relationship between farming and mining in Appalachian Maryland. This experience enables students and visitors to travel back 100 years to the Evergreen farm, when living off the land meant not only farming but using abundant natural resources including forest, streams, wildlife, and minerals, specifically coal. The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were expended to fund the contractual services of two staff - a Senior Tradesman and a Tradesman to complete the construction and associated lighting and electrical for the blacksmith shop, the boarding house, and the mine opening as well as display and signage development.

For All Seasons, Inc.

Amount Awarded - \$38,682

Project Name - Building Capacity for Increased Telehealth in Maryland's Rural Mid-Shore

Focus Area – Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - For All Seasons, Inc.'s mission is to provide therapy, advocacy, education, and psychiatric care in a safe environment that nurtures wellness. It is the largest licensed behavioral health and rape crisis center serving Maryland's Mid-Shore without regard to one's ability to pay and offers psychiatry, clinical mental health and rape crisis services. The *Building Capacity for Increased Telehealth in Maryland's Rural Mid-Shore* project invested in new laptops with internal cameras and iPhones for For All Seasons' staff to be able to provide mental health and rape crisis services to residents of the Mid-Shore through telehealth. The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the purchase of a) eighteen (18) 15" laptops and the labor installation and set-up associated costs and b) five (5) mobile phones and accessories for telehealth purposes.

Forever Maryland

Amount Awarded - \$28,600

Project Name - Forever Maryland's Building Better Boards for Maryland's Local Land Trusts: Training & Toolkit

Focus Area – Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - Forever Maryland was founded to promote and enhance land conservation statewide through education, advocacy, and outreach. *Forever Maryland's - Building Better Boards for Maryland's Local Land Trusts: Training & Toolkit* will improve the standards and practices of leadership training for the 32 land trusts across the state. Through universal adoption of a standardized training, Forever Maryland aims to provide tools to build local land conservation leadership, to expand the diversity of conservation leaders, and increase governance best management practices ultimately improving Maryland's environmental future. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to a) support the salary, wages, and travel of staff dedicated to the project, b) purchase materials, supplies and, printing of the board training toolkit; c) video production; d) postage; and, e) consultant services for curriculum development.

Garrett College Foundation
Amount Awarded - \$40,000
Project Name - Career Technology Training Center Infrastructure Upgrades
Focus Area – Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - Garrett College, a two-year accredited community college in Western Maryland, provides an accessible, quality and comprehensive educational experience in a supportive environment to a diverse student population in both traditional and non-traditional settings. The *Career Technology Training Center Infrastructure Upgrades* project included renovating existing facilities to expand the College's Workforce Development training program. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to fund the a) wall construction, insulation, steel, lighting, doors, and three Reznor type propane heaters for the Diesel Mechanic program; and, b) wall construction, new doors and associated hardware for the culinary laboratory and the Maker Space classroom.

Habitat for Humanity Choptank, Inc.
Amount Awarded - \$29,202
Project Name - Seniors Living Safely
Focus Area - Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - Habitat for Humanity Choptank, is a nonprofit organization that focuses on building homes, communities, and hope. The MAERDAF grant funding was utilized help build the capacity to empower local families through shelter by leveraging funding to host two AmeriCorps positions. The AmeriCorps members provided outreach to older adults, connecting them to critical health and safety repair resources so they may remain in their homes. Outreach included installing smoke detectors, carbon monoxide monitors, and grab bars to alleviate the most critical hazards. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the a) the stipend for 2 AmericCorp members and b) equipment for safety repairs that included 10 grab bars, 10-6 packs of smoke detectors, and 2-6 packs of carbon monoxide monitors.

Habitat For Humanity of Wicomico County, Inc.
Amount Awarded - \$40,000
Project Name - Habitat Housing Plus
Focus Area - Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - Habitat for Humanity of Wicomico County brings people together to build homes, communities and hope on the Lower Eastern Shore. Their *Habitat Housing Plus* program encompasses their core housing programs and expands their services to reach low-income renters and homeowners with emergency COVID relief, access to home repairs related to TidalHealth's EXHALE initiative, as well as long-term access to financial literacy and other state/federal programs related to housing stability. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, was utilized to help build the organization's capacity in order to help run the Habitat Housing Plus program by supporting three AmeriCorps members and five Habicorps reentry member wages.

Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, Inc.
Amount Awarded - \$20,000
Project Name - Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area 5-year Plan
Focus Area - Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA) mission is to promote the stewardship of the historic, cultural and natural Civil War resources in Carroll, Frederick and Washington counties; encourage superior visitor experiences; and stimulate tourism, economic prosperity and educational development, thereby improving the quality of life of our community for the benefit of both residents and visitors. HCWHA hired a consultant to prepare the "HCWHA Strategic Action Plan" to cover a five-year period starting July 2022 and continuing through June 2027. The plan creates a new road map for the heritage area to stimulate the heritage tourism economies in its serving area though a variety of services to nonprofits, government entities and other partners. The final document includes (1) An Executive Summary, (2) a narrative report describing all project activities and findings (with appendices, including a logic model to clarify the path to achieve organizational development/sustainability goals) and (3) a five-year action plan matrix with program and organizational/development goals, due dates, responsible parties, and metrics (outputs, outcomes, and indicators of impact). The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay for a consultant to prepare the "HCWHA Strategic Action Plan."

Maryland Rural Development Corporation
Amount Awarded - \$40,000
Project Name - Whole Family Innovations
Focus Area: Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - Maryland Rural Development Corporation (MRDC) provides services in response to the needs of rural, low-income households and communities throughout Maryland. For the past five years, MRDC has been operating wraparound services for adult education classes run by the local community colleges and their Head Start locations. The *Whole Family Innovations* project continued these efforts with the addition of offering social service support with the goal to attract more families, increase two-generation impact, and help more people lift themselves out of poverty. Additionally, MRDC expanded to Kent County and established in-person contact in their Edgewater and Aberdeen locations. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the salaries and wages for two teachers, a social worker, and childcare services.

Mid-Atlantic Gigabit Innovation Collaboratory
Amount Awarded - \$15,414
Project Name – CyberJobs
Focus Area – Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - The Mid-Atlantic Gigabit Innovation Collaboratory's (MAGIC) mission is to build a tech ecosystem that creates and nurtures talent, entrepreneurship, and tech businesses, elevating the Westminster Gigabit Community to lead the Mid-Atlantic region. MAGIC extended its Cyber Jobs program, initially funded in 2020 by a USDA Rural Business Development Grant, in order to expose rural students to cybersecurity workforce development and career opportunities to 8 rural counties throughout Maryland. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, will be expended to pay for the a) hourly rate of the Program Director; b) host location for two competitions; and, c) food for volunteers/students for a Hackathon. *The Grantee was approved a 9-month extension as the in-person events had to be canceled due to COVID-19 variants and subsequent low registration. The project is set to be completed by March 31, 2022.*

Mid-Shore Pro Bono, Inc.
Amount Awarded - \$21,000
Project Name - Student Internship and Experiential Learning Program
Focus Area - Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - Mid-Shore Pro Bono (MSPB) is a nonprofit organization that connects low income people with legal representation in need of civil legal services. MSPB is uniquely positioned to expose students who are interested in the practice of law, social work, and public interest work hands on experience that will introduce them to working with rural, underserved, populations lacking the same resources as urban areas through their *Internship and Experiential Learning Program*. This program provided undergraduate and law school students with exceptional opportunities in the areas of public interest law, non-profit management, community service and basic work experience. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, was expended to support a) the stipends of four paid interns; b) printing costs for program flyers and application documents; c) program advertisements; d) an interactive website upgrade; e) the creation of a promotional video; and f) general project office supplies. *Grantee was approved a 6-month extension in order to include the Fall 2022 interns in the project. The project will be completed by December 30, 2022.*

The Greater Cumberland Committee
Amount Awarded - \$40,000
Project Name - I-68 Regional Alliance Workforce Housing Initiative
Focus Area - Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - The Greater Cumberland Committee (TGCC) is a nonprofit that seeks to educate regional business leaders, professionals and consumers on matters related to sustainable economic development in the northern Appalachian, tri-state region. TGCC is focused on projects of regional relevance in the areas of transportation infrastructure, education and workforce development, energy and natural resources and next generation leadership. Industry, academic, government, non-profit and economic development leaders from each of the five counties in the 3 states (Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania) that comprise the I-68 Region identify the lack of adequate housing for professional workers as a significant obstacle to the attraction

(The Greater Cumberland Committee continued) and retention of workers needed to grow and sustain the economic development of the area. With no reliable data compiled on a regional basis to support the wide-spread perception that adequate housing for the targeted segment - "middle market" or "professional" workforce does not currently exist. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to engage a consultant to complete a housing study that 1. Defined and determined whether the perceived housing shortage for the targeted workforce segment exists and 2. If the existence of inadequate housing for this segment is verified by data and delivered a set of specific recommendations and action steps to ameliorate the shortage quickly.

Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council

Amount Awarded - \$40,000

Project Name - Maryland Forest Products Industry Risk Analysis

Focus Area - Agriculture & Forestry

Project Summary - The Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council's (WMRC&D) mission is to build and sustain resource conservation programs which raise the quality of social, economic, and environmental development in our region. The Council was incorporated in 1993 to represent Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, and Carroll counties. The Maryland Forest Products Risk Analysis project identified Maryland's timber as a reliable input for sustainably and responsibly sourced forest products for domestic and export markets. The Risk Analysis is the foundational document supporting the subsequent development of two additional efforts: a branding campaign differentiating Maryland forest products, and the basis for third-party reporting of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) metrics. The project highlighted Maryland's forests as a valuable resource which continues to support new resource-based jobs and a vibrant rural economy. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to hire a consultant to develop the Maryland Forest Products Risk Analysis and administrative related expenses.

Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council

Amount Awarded - \$19,000

Project Name - Development of Added Value Revenue Streams Through Hemp Waste By-Product Processing

Focus Area - Community & Economic Development

Project Summary - The Mountain Maryland Hemp Alliance consists of 10 hemp operations in the Western Maryland area. A consistent problem that these farms face is a buildup of CBD (cannabinoids) stalk waste and a lack of outlets to make money from it. Many different products can be produced from this "waste", but processing capacity has not yet been developed for small scale operations like those in western Maryland. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to purchase post harvesting equipment in support of this project. Equipment included a XL575 DR Chipper Shredder, a Model 198 gas powered Hammer Mill, and a 9" 2-Roller 15 Horse Power Electric Start Diesel Pellet Mill; a trailer to transport the Mill; travel costs to pick up the equipment and moving it from farm to farm; and salary and wages for the project manager to administer the grant funds.

Energy - 2 Grant Award Projects Totaling \$62,000

Adkins Arboretum, Ltd.

Amount Awarded - \$40,000

Project Name - For the Love of Trees and a Sustainable Future

Focus Area - Energy

Project Summary - Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve located in Caroline County whose mission is to provide exceptional experiences in nature to promote environmental stewardship to the public. The Arboretum strives to foster sustainability in - human, natural, and financial resources as a model for environmental stewardship. The MAERDAF grant funds were used to install a cutting-edge high-efficiency heating and cooling system in the Arboretum Visitor's Center. The Center welcomes visitors and provides a meeting space, a reception area, gift shop, bathrooms, and the staff offices.

Forest Glen Commonwealth, Inc.

Amount Awarded - \$22,000

Project Name - Capacity Building -- Improve Energy Efficiency for Rural Small Businesses and Farms

Focus Area - Energy

Project Summary - Forest Glen Commonwealth, Inc. is working in collaboration with the Maryland Clean Energy Center and Maryland Agriculture and Resource Based-Industry Development Corporation in order to develop a capacity building project to improve energy efficiency investment opportunities for rural businesses and farms, including small businesses that may be eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Energy for America Program Grant and Loan Funds. The goal of this project is to improve rural business profitability and support energy efficiency improvements through Capacity Building. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support a) consultant services; b) energy audit subcontract services; c) financial/legal administration; d) communications to include both a series of webinars and publications; e) and travel.

Youth Engagement - 3 Grant Award Projects Totaling \$107,015

Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education

Amount Awarded - \$30,000

Project Name - Empowering Young People for Forestry and Natural Resources Careers in Rural Maryland

Focus Area - Youth Engagement

Project Summary - Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) promotes environmental awareness by serving teachers, natural resource managers, nature center staff and environmental program managers with training, conferences, publications, programs and other resources. MAEOE and Forestry partners in Eastern and Western Maryland will work together to develop and deliver "Green Jobs: Exploring Forest and Natural Resource Careers." The program will provide educators with the background and resources to foster student understanding of and appreciation for the local environment including forested lands by using Project Learning Tree activities and the 2021 Forest Literacy Framework - a nationally recognized environmental education curriculum proven to increase students' knowledge, reasoning, academic skills, and forest literacy. The project will provide opportunities for youth to meet professionals working in Green jobs and to learn about local forested lands and the role that they can have in forestry today and in the future. The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were expended to support a) the salary, wages and fringe benefits for two MAEOE staff members; b) teacher stipends; c) travel costs students, teachers, and staff to related events; d) conference scholarships for 20 teachers and 5 students; and, e) program supplies.

Preservation Maryland

Amount Awarded - \$37,015

Project Name - Restoring the Past & Building Tomorrow's Leaders

Focus Area - Youth Engagement

Project Summary - Preservation Maryland is dedicated to preserving Maryland's historic buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes, and archaeological sites through outreach, funding, and advocacy. The *Restoring the Past & Building Tomorrow's Leaders* program focuses on the care, rehabilitation and upkeep of historic cemeteries; especially cemeteries associated with communities of color. The program has four distinct impacts 1) engage young adults across the state in learning, leading and supporting cemetery cleaning & conservation; 2) invest primarily in cemeteries associated with communities of color to protect these resources; 3) through preservation and awareness, develop a network of historic cemeteries that will attract heritage tourists; and, 4) develop a pathway for young adults interested in a career in historic trades. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, will be expended to support the a) salary, wages, and fringe benefits for an AmeriCorps Vista position; b) travel costs; c) materials and supplies (spray bottles, brushes, sponges, plastic scrappers, cleaning agent D2, graffiti removal, additional cleaners as needed and, Personal Protective Equipment; d) publications; e) administrative costs to manage the grant. *The Grantee was approved a 6-month extension due the delay to fulfill the Cemetery Preservation Workshop Coordinator by a qualified candidate until April. The project will be completed by December 30, 2022.*

The Parents' Place of Maryland

Amount Awarded - \$40,000

Project Name - Empowering Parents & Youth with Hidden Disabilities

Focus Area - Youth Engagement

Project Summary - The Parents' Place of Maryland's mission is to empower families as advocates and partners in improving education and health outcomes for children with disabilities and special healthcare needs with a commitment to diversity and equity. The purpose of the *Empowering Parents and Youth with Hidden Disabilities* project is to facilitate a four-day training series for families that empower them to gain disability pride as well as self-advocacy and transition planning skills so that youth may develop self-directed transition portfolios for usage in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP). This training includes but is not limited to topics such as: the laws related to the Rehab Act of 1973 Section 504, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, disability pride and disability awareness; creating a vision; the role of the family in the transition process; and, developing an individualized transition plan within the IEP. The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support the cost of up to 15 families to go through a four day training that included the the salary of the contracted Parent Educator/Trainer and purchased the supplies and materials related to the daily usage for project activities and training. *The Grantee was approved a 6-month extension as the original Trainer for the project did not perform the work as anticipated and had to be replaced. The new trainer is working out very well and the project is planned to be completed by December 30,2022.*

Connect With The Rural Maryland Council

Website: rural.maryland.gov **Email:** rmc.mda@maryland.gov **Phone:** (410) 841-5772

Facebook: facebook.com/ruralmaryland.council

Twitter: twitter.com/RuralMaryland

