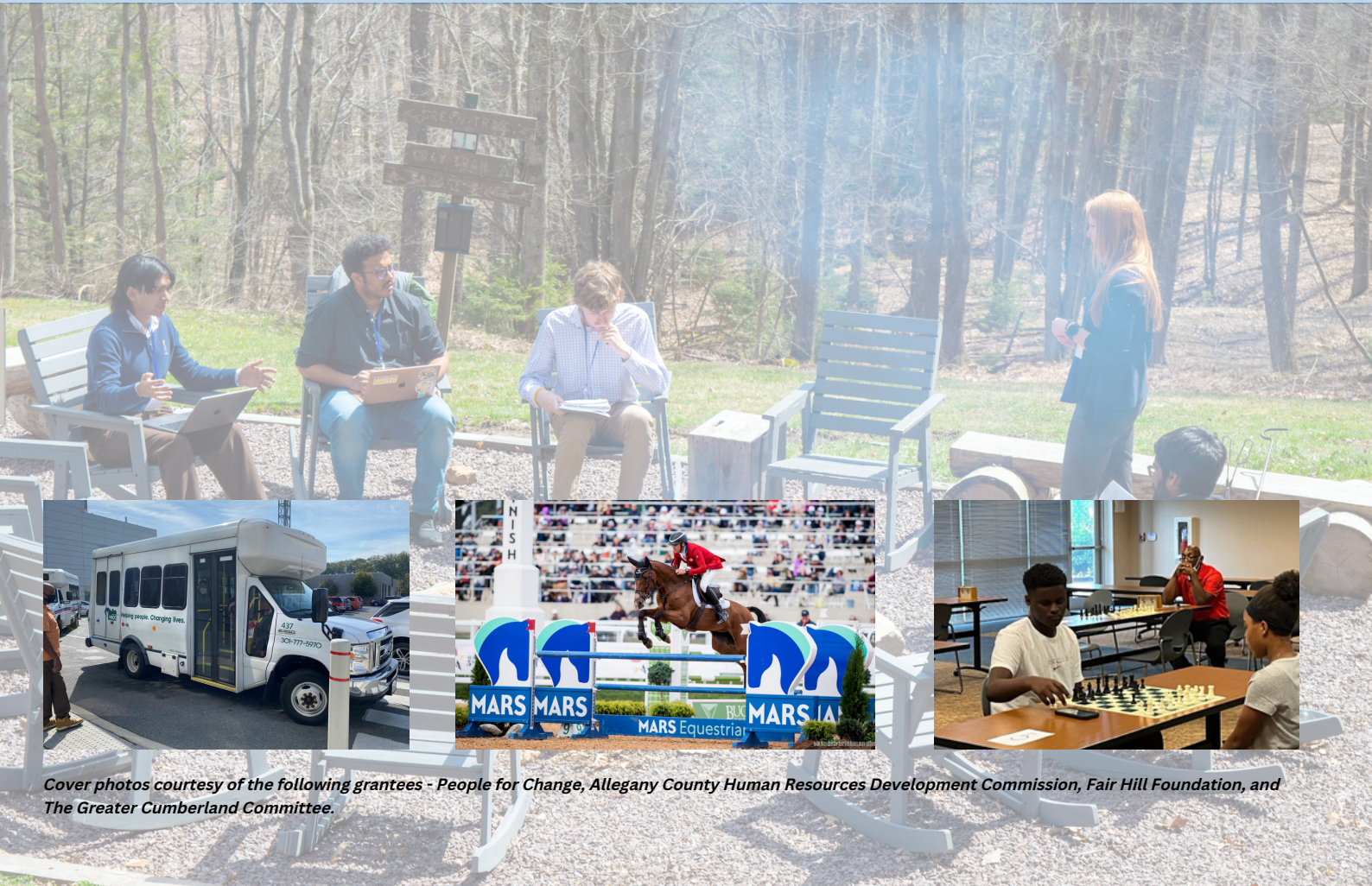




RURAL MARYLAND PROSPERITY INVESTMENT FUND

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2022



Cover photos courtesy of the following grantees - People for Change, Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, Fair Hill Foundation, and The Greater Cumberland Committee.

RMPIF Overview

The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) was authorized by the Maryland General Assembly in 2006. In 2016, RMPIF received funding for the first time in the amount of \$2 million and was funded in Fiscal Year 2022 at \$6 million. The RMPIF program is funded through the State of Maryland’s Annual Operating Budget. In FY2022, the Grant Review Board awarded 28 grants totaling \$4,739,212.

The goal of RMPIF is to help raise the overall standard of living in rural areas to a level that meets or exceeds statewide benchmark averages by 2030, while preserving the best aspects of a pastoral heritage and rural way of life. Resources provided to RMPIF are designed to facilitate significant targeted investments in important economic and community development programs and promote regional and intergovernmental cooperation. These investments also enable local and regional public and nonprofit organizations to leverage additional non-state financial and human resources to facilitate the realization of sustainable rural development objectives.

RMPIF supports the Rural Maryland Council’s operations and activities at \$500,000, the states’ five rural Regional Councils at \$2,000,000 (\$400,000/Council), as well as grant projects awards that focus on rural entrepreneurship development, rural health care organizations, and regional infrastructure projects. Additionally RMPIF supports the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF). MAERDAF provides capacity building grant funds to rural nonprofit service providers and community colleges. Refer to the FY2022 MAERDAF Annual Report for a list of MAERDAF grant projects funded by RMPIF. The Grant Review Board approved an additional allocation of \$292,303 from RMPIF for a total of \$910,788 in MAERDAF grant awards.

Fiscal Year 2022 Grant Review Board Members

- **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

RMPIF 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.

RMPIF FY2022 Awards At-A-Glance

Grant Expenditures	FY22 Budget	FY22 Actual	Number of Grants	RMPIF Region Served	
Regional Councils	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	5	Eastern Shore (Nine County Region-Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset)	12 Awards
Infrastructure	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,125,000.00	6	Southern (Three County Region-Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's)	5 Awards
Entrepreneurship	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 647,763.00	5	Western (Five County Region-Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, Carroll)	6 Awards
Health Care	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 966,449.00	12	Northern (Harford County)	3 Awards
MAERDAF	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 792,788.00	27	Statewide	1 Award
MAERDAF Line item	\$ 118,485.00	\$ 118,000.00	3		
TOTAL Grant Expenditures	\$ 5,618,485.00	\$ 5,597,500.00	58	Total:	28

Entrepreneurship - 5 Grants Awarded Totaling \$647,763

Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc.

Amount Awarded - \$160,000

Project Name - FITCI AgTech Lab

Focus Area - Entrepreneurship

Project Summary - Frederick Innovative Technology Center Inc (FITCI) is a business incubator/accelerator created to encourage technical innovation & advance the development of commercially viable businesses in Frederick, Maryland. The FITCI Agricultural Technology (AgTech) Lab project is being constructed and outfitted as an AgTech lab space in FITCI's new Biotechnology Center, located at 321 Ballenger Center Drive in Frederick. This project will allow FITCI and its partners to facilitate local agribusiness entrepreneurs' access to necessary and new technologies, enable scientific collaboration, promote advancement of regenerative and cellular agriculture, create jobs and economic growth, and support struggling agriculture and related businesses in post-pandemic economic recovery. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, are being expended for a) the construction of 1,250 square foot shared AgTech lab space located in the new and b) equipment for the AgTech lab to include 8 - 6' Cambridge Series Table with Epoxy Top & Strut Overhead Shelving and 2 NuAire LabGuard NU-540 Class II Type A2 Biosafety Cabinets. *The Grantee was approved a 6-month extension due to significant delays related to construction of the facility. The project is set to be completed by December 30, 2022.*

Harford Community College

Amount Awarded - \$142,763

Project Name - Harford Community College Innovation Center

Focus Area - Entrepreneurship

Project Summary - Harford Community College Innovation Center (HCCIC) is a resource program focused on fulfilling the needs of under-served rural communities, meeting the needs of regional employers, and supporting the advancement of an entrepreneurial mindset throughout the Susquehanna region. HCCIC is a part of an umbrella program called Harford's Leading Edge, powered by Ratcliffe Foundation whose mission educates and trains a new cadre of highly-skilled workers via pathways for adult learners and high school students, upskills the current workforce for career advancement, and supports entrepreneurs in launching new and accelerating existing businesses. Located within the Boys and Girls Clubs of Harford and Cecil Counties at Edgewood, the facility provides an opportunity to introduce youth to innovation and high-demand careers, while providing greater accessibility to residents along the Route 40 corridor. Phase two of this project seeks expansion of the HCCIC and Harford's Leading-Edge Training Center with design and build out of woodshop lab space and a training space specific for warehousing and manufacturing trades programming. The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, will be expended to design and build out the woodshop lab space.

People for Change Coalition

Amount Awarded - \$70,000

Project Name - Summer Career Enrichment Program

Focus Area - Entrepreneurship

Project Summary - The People for Change Coalition (PFC Coalition) is a membership organization representing over 300 nonprofit and minority businesses in Prince George's County, Southern Maryland, and throughout the state of Maryland. Incorporated in November 2011, their mission is to develop the nonprofit and minority business sector by providing assessment, support and expansion services. The Summer Career Enrichment Program (SCEP) is an 8-week pilot program for 100 middle school students in partnership with the Dorchester Career and Technology Center and North Dorchester Middle School for the summer of 2021. Students will be enrolled in 4 different tracks: Youth Cyber Security Program, Successful Teens and Nonprofit Database Design, and Mighty Youth TV Production, and Making the Right Moves Chess Immersion. Through the program students were exposed to careers and entrepreneurship tracks in cyber, database design, and media arts. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support a) the salary and wages for the project management; b) weekly travel costs to Dorchester County for workshops and trainings; c) supplies - thumb drives, software, instructional notebooks, and chess supplies; d) consultant services for the Instructors and Assistants; e) marketing and graphic design of program materials; and f) printing costs for 100 student certificates.

The Greater Cumberland Committee
Amount Awarded - \$175,000
Project Name - Forest Products Brand Development
Focus Area: Entrepreneurship

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. The Forest Products Brand Development project will create a certified branding program to promote Maryland wood products as a preferred option for local commercial, institutional, and retail buyers. The branding program will be designed specifically to meet the goals of corporate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investment objectives. By focusing on certifying ESG outcomes for such companies, the branding program will open Western Maryland forest product businesses to \$3 trillion in corporate investments. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support a) consultant services; b) two 2-day conferences/charrettes; c) logic model development; d) IMPLAN data; e) meeting supplies; f) website development and publications; g) grant administrative costs.

University of Maryland Eastern Shore-Department of Agriculture, Food and Resource Sciences
Amount Awarded - \$100,000
Project Name - Student Education and Training in Hemp, Production, Processing and Value-Added Product Development
Focus Area - Entrepreneurship

Project Summary - The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) industrial hemp program was established in 2019. The program has faculty with expertise in hemp genetics and breeding, plant protection, extraction and value-added product development. Faculty currently provide extensive training to students from rural areas in hemp cultivation and post-harvest handling procedures including drying, curing, and trimming of flowers for their conversion into value added products. The goal of the project is to build capacity and develop educational resources to provide student training in hemp production, processing, extraction, and value-added products. The equipment purchased through the project will enable UMES to provide students with hands-on learning experience that can prepare them for the emerging workforce. The project is expected to be sustainable and provide an impetus for stimulating entrepreneurship, generating a skilled workforce, and enhancing the economies of rural Maryland communities. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, are being expended to support a) the salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for a project coordinator; an Associate Professor for coordination and supervision of the project; and a field technician; b) extraction equipment to include a rotary evaporator, an ultra-low temperature freezer, a liquid CO2 extractor; two Buchner funnels; a flower shredder; and a vacuum pump. *Grantees have been approved a 6-month extension due to chain-supply issues and purchasing equipment. The project is scheduled to be completed by December 30, 2022.*

Infrastructure - 6 Grants Awards Totaling \$1,125,000

End Hunger in Calvert County
Amount Awarded - \$250,000
Project Name - End Hunger Warehouse Food Distribution Program
Focus Area - Infrastructure

Project Summary - The End Hunger in Calvert County Warehouse provides mission-critical food distribution services for low-income families living throughout rural Southern Maryland. The completion of the warehouse facility is essential to fulfilling End Hunger's role as the regional food hub providing food, infrastructure, technical support, and best practices to 72 rural feeding organizations. Over 25,000 individuals rely on the services provided by End Hunger and our partners to meet their daily need for food. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to complete the fire suppression sprinkler system and required water storage tank installed at the End Hunger in Calvert County Warehouse located at 6201 Solomons Island Road, Huntingtown, MD 20639.

Fair Hill Foundation**Amount Awarded - \$50,000****Project Name - Completing Infrastructure for the Inaugural Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill****Focus Area - Infrastructure**

Project Summary - The Fair Hill Foundation raises funds to assist the State of Maryland in protecting, preserving and enhancing all facets of the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area (FHNRMA); advancing national and international sports competitions through the development of competition facilities protective of the unique environmental conditions at FHNRMA; and supporting resource conservation and environmental projects at FHNRMA through funding and providing technical assistance. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, was expended to help complete construction of the Maryland 5 Star cross country course - the 6,280-meter course that included 45 jumping efforts in the form of fences, water hazards, ditches and mounds. Work included lineal aeration, adding topsoil and sod, applying fertilizer and grassy weed pre-emergent herbicide, mowing, hand raking, filling, patching, seeding, and watering the course.

It Takes a Village to Help Our Children, Inc.**Amount Awarded - \$200,000****Project Name - Village Youth Center Building Project****Focus Area – Infrastructure**

Project Summary - It Takes a Village to Help Our Children, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has been serving the Crisfield community for more than 15 years providing quality out of school programming for 'at risk' youth. The Village Youth Center Building Project will provide an adequate facility to serve the youth and their families the organization supports. The Center will provide a place for student academic enrichment, STEAM activities, and recreation. Most importantly, the Center will provide a place of belonging where students can discover their gifts and talents and find their place in this world. The new 8,496 square foot building will replace the former Whittington Primary School which was irreparably damaged by hurricane Sandy and will contain a large multi-purpose room essential for youth recreation, 4 classrooms, a small kitchen area, 2 administrative offices, student bathrooms, a lobby and a mechanical room. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, are to be expended for construction costs for the facility located at 6 Asbury Avenue in Crisfield, Maryland. *The Grantee was approved a 1-year extension because they have not been able to start construction due to the rising cost of materials. The project is to be completed by June 30, 2023.*

Maryland Rural Development Corporation**Amount Awarded - \$25,000****Project Name - Small Town Infrastructure****Focus Area - Infrastructure**

Project Summary - For over 25 years, Maryland Rural Development Corporation (MRDC) has identified and evaluated economically feasible, innovative regional solutions to infrastructure issues for historically impoverished rural communities in areas that have had difficulty installing traditional wastewater treatment systems, water systems, and storm water abatement. MRDC provides water-related technical assistance, including such services as feasibility studies, preliminary design assistance and supervision, oversight of projects, or training for the development of an application for financial assistance. The Corporation currently has 24 projects in 14 towns, and will be expanding to more towns in the coming year. In the past, MRDC has worked with the Rural Community Assistance Project (RCAP) to use (USDA) funding with towns, but RCAP is discontinuing this work. MRDC worked with USDA directly, but only after a three-month gap between the two programs. Since these projects cannot come to a standstill, MRDC will utilize the RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the salary and wages for a Western Maryland Lead and a Eastern Shore Technical Service Provider to support the projects during the gap time.

Town of Rising Sun**Amount Awarded - \$300,000****Project Name - Water Line Replacement/Broadband Enhancement****Focus Area - Infrastructure**

Project Summary - The Town of Rising Sun's *Waterline Replacement/Broadband Enhancement* project will eliminate various water quality issues, provide clean drinking water to underserved areas, significantly improve community fire protection, extend

(Town of Rising Sun continued) broadband services, generate economic development through the creation of a Technology Corridor with high paying skilled jobs, and facilitate a cleaner environment for the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding watersheds. The project will entail the following: 1) the replacement of an undersized dead-end water line for a larger line to be connected to the primary water distribution line, creating a looped system for enhanced fire flow protection; 2) the existing Maryland Fiber B-Top (Broadband) line will be extended through the water line trench to a Technology Corridor that is in the concept stage. The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, will be expended to support the a) water line work; b) erosion and sediment control; c) dry utilities; and d) project engineering, contingency, inspections, and administration. *The Grantee has informed RMC that the project has been delayed due to rising construction costs and a delay in the permitting process. A projected timeline is under discussion and will be presented to RMC for review and an extension approval in the Fall 2022.*

United States Bomb Technician Association
Amount Awarded - \$300,000
Project Name - Maryland Technology Center
Focus Area - Infrastructure

Project Summary - The Town of Indian Head, the United States Bomb Technician Association (USBTA), and Charles County's Military Alliance Council (MAC), have partnered in order to complete the renovation of a vacant building located at 4450 Indian Head Highway-- across the street from the College of Southern (CSM) Maryland's Velocity Center and less than a mile outside of the Naval Support Facility Indian Head's front gate. The building will become the Maryland Technology Center (MTC) and is located in an Opportunity Zone, a Historically Underutilized Building Zone as well as a Sustainable Community. This project is Phase II of the Town of Indian Head Revitalization Plan and is recognized as one of Charles County's Top 5 Priorities in their Charles County Five-Year Strategic Economic Development Plan to attract technology- based firms and organizations to Indian Head. The project involved renovating a 12,600 sq. ft. of a 29,292 sq. ft. vacant building. Besides office space that will allow the USBTA to relocate its headquarters to Maryland, the newly renovated space will provide state-of-the-art, computer assisted training rooms for up to 60 students, a wet lab & metal shop and an auto shop in accordance with the attached diagram. The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the construction of the Maryland Technology Center that will include a) installation of lighting and controls; b) furnishing and installation of flooring; c) installation of a complete security system; and, d) plumbing.

Health Care - 12 Grant Awards Totaling \$966,449

Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, Inc.
Amount Awarded - \$60,000
Project Name - Mobility Management Program
Focus Area - Health Care

Project Summary - The Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, Inc. (HRDC) is a Community Action Agency and Area Agency on Aging. Their mission is to eliminate social and economic barriers to promote individual and community stability through services, advocacy and collaboration. The Mobility Management program operating under Allegany County HRDC Aging Department focuses on filling the transportation gap for Allegany County. From Monday through Sunday HRDC vehicles are fully operational between 7am-10pm. The Mobility Management program improves the quality of life for seniors, low-income and disabled individuals in the community by providing wheelchair, van and cab transports to and from the hospital, mental and physical health agencies. Mobility Management also collaborates with several health care agencies in the county to ensure all at risk clients are being served. Partnering agencies include UPMC Western Maryland Hospital, Allegany County Health Department, B.A.C.H.S, Progressive Physical Therapy, Rehab 1st, and Committed to Change. The RMPiF award, along with matching funds, will be expended to support a) the salary, wages and fringe benefits of the Mobility Program Manager; b) client transportation services; c) vehicle maintenance and repairs; and, d) grant management administrative costs. *The Grantee has been approved a 3-month extension as they ran into an issue of using cab vouchers since none of the cab drivers used them and access to handicap accessible vehicles. Funds were approved to be reallocated to provide new partner incentives to buy in for transportation services that are free of charge to the client. The project is scheduled to be completed by September 30, 2022.*

Channel Marker, Inc**Amount Awarded - \$125,000****Project Name - Channel Marker - Psychiatric Crisis Beds****Focus Area - Health Care**

Project Summary - Channel Marker provides and coordinates mental and physical health support services to individuals challenged by severe and persistent mental illness and provides residential homes to clients with more severe mental illness in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties. Crisis Bed stabilization programs serve individuals suffering from a urgent behavioral health crisis who require facility based crisis services in a safe, structured setting. The programs provide continuous 24 hour supports for individuals who do not require intensive clinical treatment in an inpatient psychiatric setting and would benefit from a short-term structured stabilization setting. Maryland's Behavioral Health Administration determined the need to double bed capacity from 8 to 16 and awarded Channel Marker the ability to host these beds in order to better serve the Eastern Shore Community. The RMPHF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the renovation project at the Channel Marker Wellness Center located at 8885 Glebe Park Drive, Easton, Maryland that will add a new Psychiatric Crisis Bed program to serve clients from the Eastern Shore. *The Grantee was approved a 6-month extension as supply chain issues added significant time to the construction/renovation part of the client based goals. The construction has been completed. The project is expected to be completed by December 30, 2022.*

Corsica River Mental Health Services, Inc.**Amount Awarded - \$7,500****Project Name - Care Connections****Focus Area - Health Care**

Project Summary - Corsica River Mental Health Services, Inc. (CRMHS) is a non-profit licensed as an Outpatient Behavioral Health Care Program under COMAR 10.63. CRMHS's mission is to provide caring, effective, and highly accessible psychiatric treatment and therapy to all mid-shore residents. The Care Connections (CC) project expands access to health care services, and other community resources that address social determinants of health, reduce health inequities and provide technology supported interventions to address chronic behavioral health conditions for a population that repeatedly uses emergency department (ED) and inpatient (IP) resources. The approach is a very "warm handoff" from select health care health providers to CRMHS programs to promote engagement and reduce their need for ED and IP admissions. Enrollees receive a notification and welcome message from the GoMo Health Concierge Program communication platform, and have immediate access to one-way, on demand support messaging 24/7. CRMHS staff receive notification of the new enrollment and reach out within 48 hours. Person-centered service plans focus on linking participants to needed community resources. The goal is for participants to access community resources, avoiding higher cost ED and IP services. The RMPHF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to the purchase the GoMo Health Technology platform.

For All Seasons, Inc.**Amount Awarded - \$72,225****Project Name - Trauma Certification for Mental Health Clinicians and Rape Center Staff****Focus Area - Health Care**

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 an offers psychiatry, clinical mental health and rape crisis services. This project supported the trauma certification of 30 For All Seasons Masters level clinicians to work with anyone who has experienced trauma, regardless of their age. It brought evidence-based professional training to their behavioral health workforce that enables them to comfortably and competently treat children and adults with a wide range of problems, symptoms and challenges resulting from trauma. The RMPHF award, along with matching funds, were expended to support a) 15 employees to be certified at the Ferentz Institute for trauma-certified training, and b) 15 employees to be certified at the TraumaPlay Institute for TraumaPlay certification.

Fort Ritchie Community Center, Inc.**Amount Awarded - \$25,000****Project Name - Rural Health Initiative****Focus Area - Health Care**

Project Summary - Fort Ritchie Center's mission is to create and provide healthy lifestyle and leisure activities, foster community traditions, and promote cultural development through the arts, education, sports, technology, and natural resources to enhance

(Fort Ritchie Community Center, Inc. continued) the quality of life for the residents and users of Fort Ritchie and surrounding communities. The Rural Health Initiative pilot program is a collaborative effort led by the Fort Ritchie Community Center to improve the quality of life for rural residents residing in Frederick and Washington Counties. The initiative combined prevention programs with health screenings that target chronic diseases associated with rural residents in Maryland and across the country. The three main components of the program are Health and Fitness, Nutrition, and Community Involvement. This initiative incorporated social activities along with informational sessions aimed at improving the quality of life for rural residents. The RMPHF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay the salary and wages of the Rural Health Initiative Coordinator and two part-time positions to assist in the successful implementation of the initiative, equipment for the project, travel costs, and marketing.

Garrett County Memorial Hospital DBA Garrett Regional Medical Center

Amount Awarded - \$143,000

Project Name - Integrative Opioid MAT Program

Focus Area - Health Care

Project Summary - The Integrative Opioid MAT Program provided Suboxone Medication-Assisted Treatment for opioid use disorder that will include follow up and enforcement of mandatory counseling, support for challenges in daily living, and access to ancillary services such as acupuncture, reflexology, and massage therapy. The program required that patients sign a contract outlining the terms of participation and participated in creation of a Patient Care Plan, which will outline their goals for treatment and in daily living. Patients were encouraged to access community services to address stressors in their lives and to use ancillary services to help manage stress and, in some cases, help relieve physical pain. The RMPHF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the a) salary and wages for the Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner; and b) ancillary services for alternative pain management.

Health Partners Inc.

Amount Awarded - \$129,300

Project Name - Expanding Access to Dental Care in Southern Maryland

Focus Area - Health Care

Project Summary – Health Partners, Inc. is dedicated to serving the community with quality healthcare, a commitment to excellence in patient services and providing compassionate care for those most in need. The Expanding Access to Dental Care project in Southern Maryland added 16 hours per week of Dental providers and supported staff allowing Health Partners to offer an additional 32 visits per week-over 1,400 annually. The addition of staff and providers increased access and reduced the wait for appointments accommodating new and returning patients while reducing the number of dental-related visits in the emergency department. The RMPHF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the a) salary and wages of dental care professionals and associated staff; b) dental supplies; c) utilities associated with internet and phone services, as well as IT maintenance/repair fees; d) electronic health record software; and, e) grant management administrative costs.

Maintaining Active Citizens, Inc.

Amount Awarded - \$50,000

Project Name - Living Well: Managing Depression

Focus Area – Health Care

Project Summary - Maintaining Active Citizens, Inc. (MAC) mission is helping older adults live with dignity and thrive in their homes and community. The *Living Well: Managing Depression* project will expand the Maryland Living Well Center of Excellence (LWCE) - MAC INC PEARLS depression management program to serve an additional 100 older adults living in rural Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset counties. PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives) is a structured, evidence-based, primarily home-based program that provides older adults with tools and strategies to reduce symptoms of depression. The program offered participants one-on-one sessions with trained PEARLS Counselors to address this under-recognized and often untreated condition that can negatively impact quality of life. The project also provided screening for social isolation, which can contribute to depression and adversely affect overall health. In response to COVID-19, LWCE developed capacity to offer virtual counseling sessions, which will be continued as needed to reduce barriers and allow more rural older adults to safely and comfortably participate in PEARLS. The RMPHF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support 80 participant fees for the PEARLS program, which include one-on-one sessions, screenings, and, virtual counseling sessions.

TidalHealth**Amount Awarded - \$125,000****Project Name - EXHALE Asthma Control Program****Focus Area - Health Care**

Project Summary - The EXHALE Asthma Control program improves the health of homes and families by connecting at-risk households with home repair resources, health education, support for the social determinants of health, and other services. A Community Health Worker (CWH) conducts a comprehensive home and health assessment to determine what is needed to create a healthy, safe, energy-efficient home. Following the assessment, the CWH links families to integrated interventions for housing rehabilitation, energy efficiency, fall/injury prevention, and asthma or other respiratory condition trigger control. The goal of the EXHALE program is to improve chronic disease management and connect participants to social services that will improve their overall quality of life, not just their respiratory condition. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, will be expended to support a) the salaries, wages and fringe benefits for 1 CHW; b) travels cost for the CHW; c) a laptop and cell phone for the CHW; d) materials and supplies for repairs to ten homes; e) educational materials about asthma and other obstructive lung diseases; f) grant management administrative costs.

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland**Amount Awarded - \$35,000****Project Name - Wheels to Wellness****Focus Area - Health Care**

Project Summary - The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland manages the Wheels to Wellness program. This program has provided travel assistance to patients for non-emergency medical appointments living in Calvert and St. Mary's counties since 2018. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, will be expended to support the a) salary, wages, and fringe benefits for the Project Manager and b) for ride mileage to transport patients. *The Grantee was approved a 6-month extension because of the a challenge with the availability of matching funds. The project is scheduled to be completed by December 30, 2022.*

University of Maryland Shore Regional Health at Chestertown**Amount Awarded - \$125,000****Project Name - UM Chestertown Mobile Wellness Team****Focus Area – Health Care**

Project Summary - The University of Maryland Chestertown Mobile Wellness Team program will enable patients to improve health access in their own communities or in their own homes, cutting down on the need for patients lacking transportation to travel for medical care in Kent and northern Queen Anne's Counties. University of Maryland Shore Mobile Wellness Teams will be located at firehouses, places of worship, and other community locations; as well as providing home visits. The program provided the equipment, staff, and infrastructure to support this important community initiative. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the a) Salary, wages and fringe benefits for the Registered Nurse Coordinator; b) Materials and supplies that include printed educational materials, wellness aids, and general supplies.

Women Supporting Women, Inc.**Amount Awarded - \$16,924****Project Name - Forward Focus Therapy Program****Focus Area - Health Care**

Project Summary - Women Supporting Women's (WSW) Forward Focus Therapy Program will provide for mental health services for 15 women and/or men diagnosed with breast cancer suffering from anxieties of their diagnosis and stress of being immune compromised during the Covid-19 pandemic. The program will permit WSW's Mentoring Coordinator to evaluate current and future survivors' mental health status to see if a referral is needed for professional mental health sessions. The sessions are being offered through tele-health or by phone and paid for from funding through the RMPIF Grant. If additional sessions are needed, survivors have the option to continue services at the health care facilities which will have the capability to accept Medicare, Medicaid or private insurances. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) the salary and wages for the Mentoring Coordinator and b) therapy sessions for 15 survivors. *The Grantee was approved a 6-month extension because of a challenge to meet the number of survivors. The project is scheduled to be completed by December 30, 2022.*

Regional Councils - 5 Grant Awards Totaling \$2,000,000

Mid-Shore Regional Council Amount Awarded - \$400,000

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC), a cooperative regional planning and development agency that serves Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties, utilized the RMPIF award to implement the following eight collaborative projects:

- 1) Regional Geographic Information Systems Cooperative (ESRGC) - Further developed an online repository and visualization tool that functions as a comprehensive data source for demographic, economic, geographic, environmental and social data pertaining to the DelMarVa Peninsula. The DelMarVa Index received guidance from the existing advisory committee, comprised of economic development professionals in each County to determine those datasets that are of the highest priority. This project subsumes the three previous dashboard projects (Healthcare, Education, Economic), rolling their results into this larger tool.
- 2) Shore Gourmet/Chesapeake Culinary Center - support the partnership between Shore Gourmet and Chesapeake Culinary Center to increase rural and economic development on the Mid-Shore by working with farmers, entrepreneurs, and institutions by developing value added products, collaborating with UMES to develop and research profitable niche crops with farmer to consumer, and brand and promote products made in the region.
- 3) DelMarVa Index - Continue working with the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and the Eastern Shore Regional Geographic Information Systems Cooperative (ESRGC) to further develop an online repository and visualization tool that will function as a comprehensive data source for demographic, economic, geographic, environmental and social data, pertaining to the DelMarVa Peninsula (or if datasets for the 3 states are not consistently available, the focus will be on the 9 counties of Maryland's Eastern Shore). The DelMarVa Index will receive guidance from the existing advisory committee, comprised of economic development professionals in each County to determine those datasets that are of the highest priority. This project subsumes the three previous dashboard projects (Healthcare, Education, Economic), rolling their results into this larger tool.
- 4) Circuit Rider - Supported a Circuit Rider position that was available to travel to jurisdictions throughout the Mid-Shore and provided specialized solutions to data analysis needs utilizing the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) platform.
- 5) Online Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) - Partnered with the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative to modernize the CEDS process in order to make it more accessible, engaging, and visually appealing. Phase One of this project included the creation of static and interactive data displays to enhance the CEDS document. Phase Two focused on creating an online StoryMap to include a narrative component and updated visual component to the CEDS documentation. Phase Three allowed for the refinement of interactive graphs, charts, and StoryMap, the updating of narratives, and development of a Hub site for the CEDS.
- 6) Housing Study - Responding to the successful data collection effort of housing challenges within the City of Cambridge in the summers of 2017 and 2018, this project will again partner with ESRGC to collect housing data for the City of Cambridge. Revisiting this study in Cambridge will allow decision-makers to see trends and to make decisions about priority remediation, potential solutions, and neighborhood comparisons of disrepair. In addition, ESRGC will collect data in the following jurisdictions: Cordova, Wye Mills, Queen Anne, Federalsburg, Templeville, Marydel, Trappe, Bellevue, and Jonestown.
- 7) Annie's Project - Supported the University of Maryland Extension in providing Annie's Project to the Mid-Shore region (Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot Counties). Annie's Project is a farm management workshop for women interested in agriculture. Other activities also include a farm tour and recordkeeping/bookkeeping workshop that will be hands on.
- 8) The Youth Cyber Security Program - Supported the partnership between the People For Change Coalition and the Dorchester Career and Technology Center by engaging students over the summer in hands-on activities and exercises in the cyber fields. Through the program, students learned about problem solving, critical thinking, and how to use some of the latest tools and techniques employed by professionals in this field. Exposure to career paths in cybersecurity was a component of the program as well.

Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland
Amount Awarded - \$400,000

The Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLESMD), a cooperative regional planning and development agency that serves Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties, will utilize the RMPIF award to implement the following eight collaborative projects:

1) Worcester STATT Internship Program (WSTATT-IP) - WSTATT-IP is a work-based learning experience that provided high school students and recent graduates from Worcester County an opportunity to explore Skill Trades, Agriculture, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) or Tourism related careers via paid internships and includes a middle school portion, known as Summer Academy, that provided instruction based on selected pathways, career exploration, and soft skills, which prepared students for their potential selection of courses of study at the Technical High School. WSTATT-IP is co-sponsored by Worcester County and the TCCLESMD.

2) Somerset Career and Technology Enrichment Program - This program was designed to give 8th through 12th grade students in Somerset County an opportunity to explore or enhance career opportunities offered at the Technical High School. By providing the enrichment opportunities students had an opportunity to experience the related skills and knowledge associated with a field of study to make an educated career choice. Students participated in the SKILLS USA program in order to develop their leadership skills, program related knowledge and skills, while preparing to compete in local, regional, state and national competitions as well as, participated in in the Drone and VEX Robotics programs encouraged students to challenge their skills and knowledge while developing critical thinking skills.

3) Lower Shore Workforce Alliance - This Alliance is a division of the TCCLESMD and provided policy and oversight for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds and programs. WIOA services were primarily delivered at the Lower Shore American Job Center located in Salisbury, Maryland.

4) Project Opportunity - Project Opportunity is a free entrepreneurship training program for veterans, active duty and reserve personnel, and military spouse as well as veteran small business owners with classes throughout Maryland. The field of entrepreneurship is and continues to be a viable option for many of these veterans.

5) Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) - ESEC is a nonprofit organization created in 2004 to help advance an entrepreneurship ecosystem on Maryland's Eastern Shore. ESEC provided in-depth services to entrepreneurs throughout the TCCLESMD service area, that included: Counseling on the feasibility of starting a business; Assistance in refining a business concept & developing a business plan; Education in established management principles & practices; Counseling in product development & marketing; Counseling in identifying & accessing capital & credit sources; Access to business support networks; and, ongoing & continued technical assistance to program graduates, including linkages to other small business services.

6) *M4Reactor STEM Maker Space* - This Maker Space provided Science, Technology, Environment, and Mathematics (STEM) oriented education and training to youth and adults that included but was not limited to providing a mobile "makerspace" to introduce STEM Careers to K-12 during the school period; provided hands-on educational activities in STEM technologies during after school/summer periods; and, provided training to appropriate use as well as skill training on STEM technologies to adults.

7) Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) is a outreach unit of Salisbury University that focuses on developing data-driven decision making tools. ESRGC 1) Supported and further developed the DelMarVa Index website to include more functionality and updated resources; 2) Expanded access to GIS technology to underserved areas of the Lower Eastern Shore; 3) Collected housing quality data for multiple jurisdictions in the Lower Shore Region; and 4) Expanded regional awareness, exchange GIS-related information and regional strategy.

8) Regional Branding and Marketing: The Council continued its economic development partnerships to grow market awareness of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (LESMD) through regional marketing and branding by supporting the Regional Communications Developer position. This position focused on the Regional Branding and Marketing Plan and included a in-house development, design, layout and editing (pre-press) of full color regional glossy brochures, highway billboards and other marketing materials, including branded/logo items, booth materials for conferences such as MACo, Rural Maryland Summit and others. The position also continued in-house development and maintenance of new Regional Economic Development website LESMD.net, as

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
Amount Awarded - \$400,000

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD), a cooperative regional planning and development agency serving Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties, will utilize the RMPPIF award to implement the following collaborative projects:

Workforce Programs

1) Skillup® Southern Maryland - Skillup® Southern Maryland was designed to help the Southern Maryland Region build a workforce ecosystem that supports positive economic development. Job seekers can explore career pathways, view local job postings, register for free online learning, and receive workforce services. Employers can search for qualified candidates, post jobs, and receive in-depth consulting to address hiring and training needs.

2) 11th Annual Regional Hiring Event - Southern Maryland's unemployment rate as of March 2021 was 5.17%, approximately 9,500 residents, and the number of underemployed residents is anecdotally known to be significant. Southern Maryland is challenged as a region to deploy solutions that lead to the economic self-sufficiency of these individuals and their families. TCCSMD held a regional hiring event for all the residents of Southern Maryland and any local business with job opportunities. The event has increased in size and popularity each year, individuals have been hired on the spot, and many others scheduled for second interviews.

3) Virtual File Room - Implemented a secure virtual file room in order to enhance workforce service delivery, record keeping, and file storage. The new and innovative way of storing files reduced overhead expenses by eliminating the need to purchase costly files, paper, ink, toner, and file cabinets associated with storing participant hard files. In addition to reducing costs, the virtual file room allowed for remote monitoring which aligned with the direction of the Maryland Department of Labor.

Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium

4) Internship - Destination Southern Maryland has had considerable growth in breadth of programs, product development, and regional impact. Additionally, the legislation has been introduced into the United States Congress to designate Southern Maryland as a National Heritage Area. All of this growth has required an analysis of capacity, and a dedicated internship was provided to a college student with qualifications within the field at a part-time basis, 20 to 25 hours per week.

5) Regional Marketing and Promotion - Enhanced regional marketing and promotion for the visitor and residential experience in rural Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. Marketing efforts focused on 'Destination Southern Maryland', the 'Piscataway Cultural Center', and the 'Southern Maryland National Heritage Area' initiatives. Regional Marketing supported the region in building its current capacity, as well as towards the national designation, with anticipation of a separate funding stream by FY2023.

Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)

6) Maryland Market Money Program - In, FY2021, SMADC partnered with the Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) to take over the Maryland Market Money (MMM) Program. This program works with farmers markets in Southern Maryland and across the state to provide funds - via a combination of county, state, grant, and fundraising money - to provide low income Women, Infants, Children (WIC) & Senior customers with additional money to match their federal benefits, and to bring in additional income for the farmers. Award funds supported this program and covered the cost travel, paperwork, program duties, and supplies related to MMM.

7) Southern Maryland Meats Refrigerated Livestock Trailer & Truck - After years of hard work and effort by many within the Southern Maryland agricultural community, Southern Maryland finally has a USDA certified slaughterhouse. The Westham Butcher Shop (formerly known as Hertzler's) is an Amish owned and operated facility in St. Mary's County that received full USDA certification on May 4th. The facility is a major win for the area, but it came with a caveat, as it currently does not have a cut-and-wrap service to break the carcasses down into choice cuts and package them under individual farm labels; at the time, the slaughterhouse could only produce USDA certified and stamped half

(TCCSMD continued) & quarter carcasses. The Regional Agricultural Center (RAC) being built by SMADC/St. Mary's County is intended to take those quarters and break them down into primal cuts and do cut and wrap, however now the RAC is a year behind in schedule due to Covid complications, this means there is a big gap in the production chain. To fill the gap, SMADC has been working with a local butcher shop in Calvert County to become USDA certified and to take the quarter carcasses from the Westham slaughterhouse to the butcher shop in Calvert via a refrigerated truck equipped with rails to hang the quarters from and slid them in and out. Award funds paid for a refrigerated truck and trailer that not only delivered the quarters to the Calvert butcher shop for cut & wrap, but it will also delivered quarters wholesale to several grocery stores in the region as well.

Transportation

8) FY22 Vanpool Incentive Program (VIP) - TCCSMD partners with other organizations to improve the quality of life throughout the region by reducing air pollution and traffic congestion. As an added benefit, Commuter Passengers in the Tri-County region were eligible to participate in a New VIP that started in September 2021. The Vanpool Incentive Program was designed to encourage the start-up of new vanpools in the Tri-County Region (either originating or terminating in the Southern Maryland Region, Calvert, Charles and St Mary's) by funding a limited number of unoccupied seats. As the vanpool reaches peak ridership, the subsidy will be reduced.

9) Wheels to Wellness (W2W) - Since 2018, W2W has transported patients for their non-emergency medical appointments. To date, the program has travelled more than 20,000 miles in Calvert and St Mary's counties. TCCSMD scaled up from the previous levels of rides of 500 to 3,000 miles per month in two counties to 4,000 to 5,000 miles per month across by expanding the program to include Charles County; developed best practices that include evidence-based measures; and made final recommendations for implementation.

Broadband

10) Broadband Planning - Though demand for faster, more reliable broadband service has grown, most rural areas still lack coverage and reliable service. Quality broadband is critical for telework, tele-education and allows for a more flexible workplace. However, Southern Maryland, like most rural areas, provides only inconsistent and slow service levels. TCCSMD will used award funds to continue planning with its Broadband, Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC) and the Bicycle Infrastructure Advisory Committee (BIAC) and identified rural areas that were served or unserved by adequate broadband communication. This planning allowed leaders to define targeted broadband upgrades and find the better solutions.

Administration, Marketing, and Communications

11) Public Relations & Outreach - TCCSMD continued to contract with Platinum PR to guide the Council in their Public Relations endeavors. Platinum PR has been a great help by assisting TCCSMD to educate citizens on its many programs included in their weekly newsletter. TCCSMD will continue to expand their social media platform in FY2022 to increase their "reach" and "followers" to provide information of the many programs in Southern Maryland.

Tri-County Council for Western Maryland Amount Award - \$400,000

The Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Inc (TCCWMD) operates as a regional planning and economic development agency and focuses on improving economic conditions in the rural areas of the State of Maryland, in particular the Western Region, comprised of Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties. TCCWMD has several key initiatives and partnerships and will utilize the RMPF award to implement the following projects:

1) Summit Financing Solutions: Expanded and improved Summit Financing Solutions, a Community Development Corporation, by increasing the capital available for lending. TCCWMD enhanced the program by placing dollars into capital, and using the existing management plan for lending, which had the opportunity to directly impact the business community and grow its lending capacity not only during the period of the grant but into the future. As these loans are repaid over time, future reuse of these funds will be consistent with the mission of TCCWMD and/or Summit Development Corporation.

(TCCWMD continued)

2) Technical Assistance for Professional Services: TCCWMD provided technical assistance for professional services to small businesses in their region. Services included but are not limited to financial/accounting services, website development and enhancement, and specialized trainings. Companies were eligible for up to \$7,500 of professional services. Funds are paid directly to the service provider upon completion of the project and satisfaction of the client.

3) Professional Development Training: TCCWMD staff were trained on Abila MIP software, Portfol and Sageworks - programs used in various aspects of lending including underwriting, loan tracking, and accounting.

4) TCCWMD New Headquarters: TCCWMD purchased a historic building located at 11 S. Lee Street in Cumberland, MD to serve as its new headquarters. RMPIF funding will be utilized towards renovations and updating of the building.

5) Administration: TCCWMD utilized the grant award to provide for the administration of the grant; salaries and fringe benefits for staff in support of economic development activities related to the Council and Summit Development Corporation; local travel to visit clients, software and office equipment; marketing materials and supplies; staff attendance at training courses.

Upper Shore Regional Council

Award Amount: \$400,000

The Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) is a cooperative regional planning and development agency serving Cecil, Queen Anne's, and Kent counties. As USRC continues in period of organizational growth, it continues to support the acceleration of existing initiatives in the counties that are aligned with the regional priorities of the Council while utilizing resources for issues that have a regional focus and impact. Emphasis continues to be on strengthening the agriculture economy, assisting with workforce development, strengthening and developing small businesses, addressing transportation concerns as well as enhancing public/private partnerships. In Fiscal Year 2022, the USRC concentrated on increasing business development and retention in the region by investigating a model solidifying regional technical assistance for small businesses while creating long term funding opportunities.

In FY22, the Upper Shore Regional Council focused on the following projects:

Business Development, Retention, and Expansion within the Upper Shore Region

- 1) Aided 10 agricultural businesses per county for a total of 30 for the region utilizing the Upper Shore Micro Ag-Grant program.
- 2) Implemented Phase 3 Oyster Rotational Harvest Pilot program in Spring 2022. Work entailed included meeting with Kent County and Queen Anne's County commercial oyster committees, and DNR and other potential partners to discuss regional project and decided on the location for second planting of oyster spat, rotational model and leasing within a sanctuary.
- 3) Upper Shore Agricultural Equity Incentive Matching Fund by a. Provided a Fund presentation and/or information sessions to farm bureau meetings; Economic Development professions; and Chambers of Commerce in region served.

Address the Workforce Needs of the Upper Shore region

- 4) Met individually with all pertinent partners (school systems, economic development, workforce network, and chamber of commerce)
- 5) Provided at least 1 forum to bring all parties together to discuss and explore a trade liaison and workforce training program.
- 6) Increased marketing of program.
- 7) Created a "working group" comprised of representatives from the private sector and public sector to advise the Technical Career Liaison.
- 8) Provided 10 grants per county for tools/equipment to students.
- 9) Trained 15 participants in the Susquehanna Workforce training program
- 10) Supported the Cecil County Public Library Mobile Tech Lab to visit 4 communities.
- 11) Supported 10 Cecil County School of Technology students visits to 5 agriculture businesses.

(USRC continued)

Marketing

- 12) Continued updating the Harvest Directory website.
- 13) Provided continual updates and improvements to the USRC website.
- 14) Updated existing and create additional marketing pieces for the USRC.
- 15) Promoted partner activities through social media and website.
- 16) Created an End of Year report for FY 2022.

Regional Planning

- 17) Coordinated meetings for the new Kent County transportation manager and transportation managers from Cecil County and Queen Anne's County.
- 18) Assisted the Kent Local Management Board (LMB) with upgrading the website dedicated to transportation.
- 19) Assisted the Kent LMB with radio and print advertising of transportation option in Kent County.
- 20) Assisted Kent LMB with creating a strategic plan for transportation.
- 21) Attended and support Maryland Upper Shore Transit meetings.
- 22) Updated USRC's and Cecil County's DataStory.
- 23) Supported GIS Circuit Rider program to complete at least one project per County in region served.

Returned Grant Award Funds

FY2020 RMC award funds were returned to RMC in the amount of \$5,542.51 from Garrett Regional Medical Center on April 21, 2022 for their Patient Ambassador Program, which was discontinued due to COVID-19 pandemic.

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