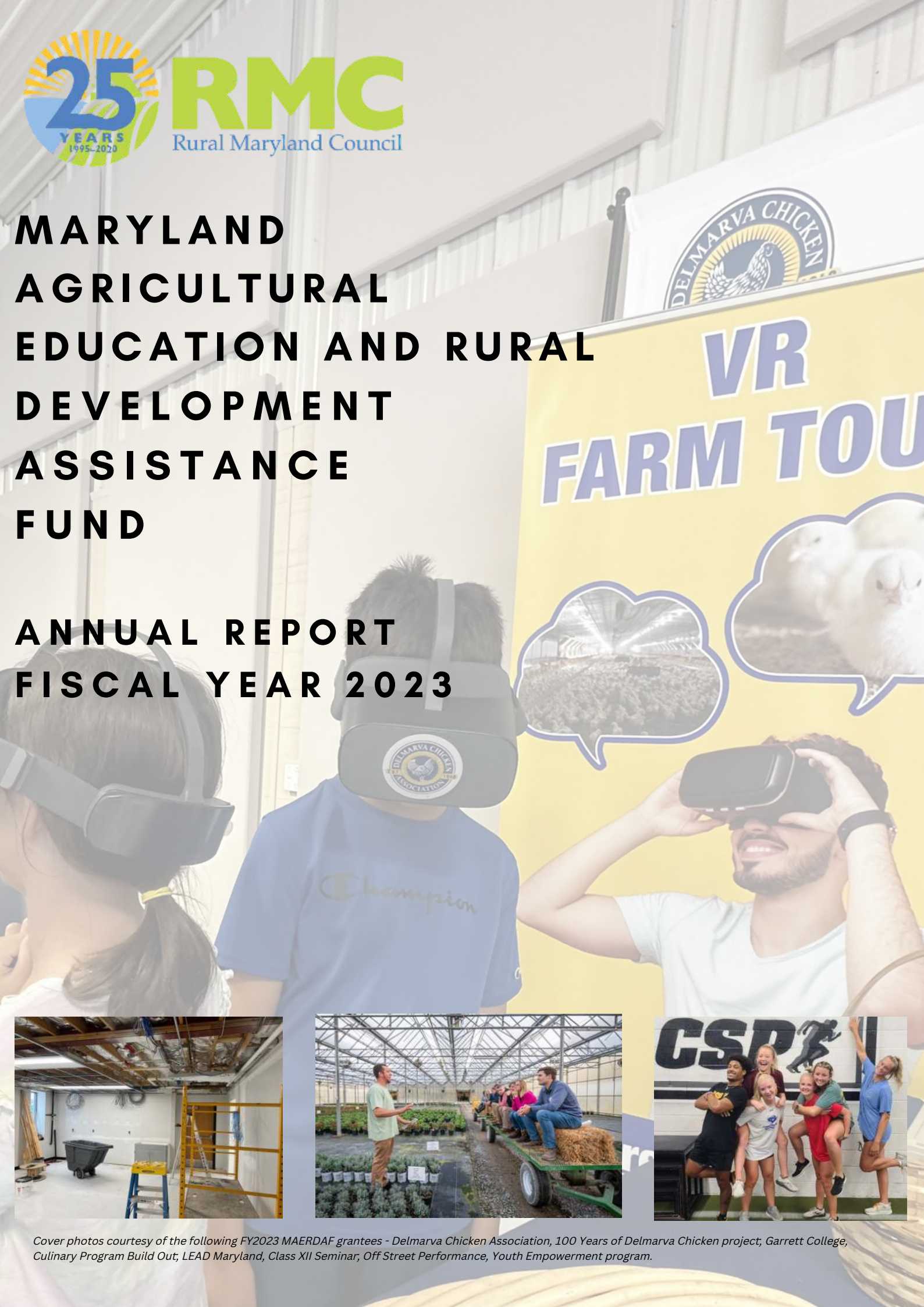




MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FUND

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2023



Cover photos courtesy of the following FY2023 MAERDAF grantees - Delmarva Chicken Association, 100 Years of Delmarva Chicken project, Garrett College, Culinary Program Build Out, LEAD Maryland, Class XII Seminar, Off Street Performance, Youth Empowerment program.

MAERDAF Overview

The Maryland Agriculture Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) grant funding provides capacity-building funds to rural-serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges. The cap for this grant program in Fiscal Year 2023 was \$45,000 and while a match is not required, it is highly preferred due to the competitiveness of the grant program. The MAERDAF program is funded through the State of Maryland's Annual Operating Budget. In Fiscal Year 2023, the MAERDAF budget received \$118,485 (PCA 39101) in its line-item appropriations and \$751,144 from the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF-PCA 38101), totaling \$869,629. Due to the high demand in MAERDAF grant applications, the Grant Review Board approved an additional allocation of \$283,574 from RMPIF for a total of \$1,153,203 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 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 2023 Grant Review Board Members were **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, MAERDAF Coordinator, **Charlotte Davis**, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council

MAERDAF Fiscal Year 2023 Awards At-A-Glance

In FY2023, this program received 123 applications totaling \$4,382,335 in requests. Of these requests, 47 grants totaling \$1,153,203 were awarded.

Region Served	Number of Awards	Amount Awarded	Focus Area	Number of Awards	Amount Awarded
Northeast (Harford County)	1 Award	\$45,000	Agriculture & Forestry	13	\$379,470
Eastern Shore (Nine County Region-Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset)	21 Awards	\$466,129	Community & Economic Development	21	\$529,369
Southern (Three County Region-Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's)	7 Award	\$171,400	Energy	2	\$60,700
Western (Five County Region -Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, Carroll)	6 Awards	\$187,454	Broadband	1	\$45,000
Statewide (Eighteen County Region)	12 Awards	\$283,220	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	10	\$138,664
Total:	47 Awards	\$1,153,203	Total:	47 Awards	\$1,153,203

Awardee	Focus Area	Total Award
Allegany College of Maryland	Agriculture & Forestry	\$45,000
Ann's Circle, Inc. (DBA Annmarie Sculpture Garden)	Agriculture & Forestry	\$45,000
Delmarva Chicken Association	Agriculture & Forestry	\$25,000
Ladies of Charity Calvert County, Inc	Agriculture & Forestry	\$6,500
LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.	Agriculture & Forestry	\$45,000
Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation	Agriculture & Forestry	\$25,500
Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation	Agriculture & Forestry	\$43,690
Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation	Agriculture & Forestry	\$1,280
Maryland Forestry Foundation	Agriculture & Forestry	\$20,000
Maryland Forests Association, Inc.	Agriculture & Forestry	\$25,000
Maryland Horse Foundation	Agriculture & Forestry	\$45,000
Steam Onward Inc	Agriculture & Forestry	\$17,500
Western Maryland RC&D	Agriculture & Forestry	\$35,000
Aaron's Place, Inc.	Community & Economic Development	\$36,000
Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity - Alpha Theta Education Foundation	Community & Economic Development	\$1,000
Bay Community Support Services, Inc.	Community & Economic Development	\$15,400
Beach to Bay Heritage Area	Community & Economic Development	\$30,000
Caroline County Historical Society	Community & Economic Development	\$45,000
Chesapeake Audubon Society-Pickering Creek Audubon Center	Community & Economic Development	\$11,590
Chesapeake Center, Inc.	Community & Economic Development	\$30,000
Chesapeake Culinary Center	Community & Economic Development	\$45,000

Awardee	Focus Area	Total Award
Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center, Inc.	Community & Economic Development	\$25,000
Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore	Community & Economic Development	\$25,000
Community Mediation Maryland	Community & Economic Development	\$33,750
Delmarva Community Services	Community & Economic Development	\$8,950
Delmarva Community Services	Community & Economic Development	\$26,325
Fair Hill Environmental Foundation, Inc.	Community & Economic Development	\$8,950
Fair Hill International, Inc.	Community & Economic Development	\$25,000
Garrett College Foundation	Community & Economic Development	\$35,000
Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna	Community & Economic Development	\$45,000
Justice Jobs of Maryland	Community & Economic Development	\$27,454
Mid Shore Community Mediation Center	Community & Economic Development	\$14,950
Minorities in Aquaculture	Community & Economic Development	\$10,000
The Ranch, Inc.	Community & Economic Development	\$30,000
Alliance for Green Heat	Energy	\$25,000
Easton Day Care Center, Inc. dba Crichlow Adkins Children's Centers	Energy	\$35,700
LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc.	Rural Broadband	\$45,000
Building African American Minds, Inc.	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$16,399

Awardee	Focus Area	Total Award
Coming of Kings, Inc.	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$10,000
Dream Queen Foundation	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$32,000
Furnace Town Foundation	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$5,000
Garrett County Arts Council, Inc.	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$15,000
It Takes a Village to Help Our Children, Inc.	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$9,000
Lower Shore Land Trust	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$21,000
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$8,000
Maryland FFA Foundation, Inc.	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$10,000
Off Street Sports Performance	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	\$12,265

Unused Grant Funds

Organization	Project Name	Award Amount	Explanation
Delmarva Community Services	Volunteer Maryland Coordinator (VMC) Funding	\$8,950 for VMC Stipend	Awardee was not able to secure a person to serve as their Volunteer Maryland Coordinator through the Volunteer Maryland program

Agriculture & Forestry - 13 Grant Award Projects - \$379,470

Allegany College of Maryland

Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00

Project Name: Skidding to Sustainability: Forestry Education in Rural Western Maryland

Project Summary: Allegany College of Maryland's (ACM) Forestry Program provides innovative training opportunities for students to learn the latest techniques and utilize industry-standard equipment for felling operations that require a skidder. A skidder is a heavy forestry machine that pulls cut trees and logs from the site where they are felled to a landing. The addition of skidder to the Forestry Program has significantly enhanced the existing technical training opportunities for forestry applications at ACM and will greatly benefit rural western Maryland.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, was expended to support the purchase of one (1) Cable Skidder.

Ann's Circle, Inc. (DBA Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center)

Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00

Community Garden Collaboration at Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center

Project Summary: Annmarie Sculpture Garden and Arts Center is committed to connecting people to art and nature. Through a wide variety of engaging exhibits, programs, classes, public projects, and annual events, Annmarie opens up opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and reflection. This project was devoted to building a greenhouse to increase community engagement and grow their educational programs for youth in Southern Maryland.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the construction and equipment for one (1) permanent 20'x42' greenhouse.

Delmarva Chicken Association

Amount Awarded: \$25,000.00

Project Name: 100 Years of Delmarva Chicken

Project Summary: Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) is a 1,600-member trade association working for the common good of the meat chicken industry in Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and Virginia's Eastern Shore. DCA celebrated the chicken industries 100th anniversary in 2023 and is embarking on a yearlong campaign of agricultural education and celebration. The effort highlights the chicken industry's advances in the 20th and 21st centuries, which includes producing more chicken with fewer resources; creating a diverse profile of Maryland chicken growers; and specific details on how Maryland farmers have reduced nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment in the Chesapeake Bay.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) advertising; b) four (4) virtual reality headsets; c) materials and supplies related to the project that include but may not be limited to headset disposable face inserts, small flash memory cards, pull-up banner, and signs; d) mileage costs for travel; and e) grant administration.

Ladies of Charity Calvert County, Inc

Amount Awarded: \$6,500.00

Project Name: Equipment Needs

Project Summary: The Ladies of Charity Calvert County ministries focus on nutritional, financial, emotional, and spiritual needs of their community by operating a food pantry located in North Beach and serving Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties. This project aids in the procurement of equipment to facilitate food and volunteer safety and promote ease of moving food and equipment from multiple sites while the current pantry building is being rebuilt.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the following equipment needs: a skatewheel conveyor system, scales, hand trucks, carts, tables, canopies, step stools, collapsible crates, battery powered fans, a mobile sink, and a beverage dispenser.

LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00

Project Name: New Leaders Serving Maryland's Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Rural Communities

Project Summary: The LEAD Maryland Foundation (LEAD) works to increase the numbers and capacities of people serving Maryland's rural communities, agriculture, and natural resources. Program participants, called Fellows, complete a two-year educational program to increase skills and knowledge for mobilizing people to address issues and community needs. Fellows learn to consider issues from local to global perspectives and gain a greater understanding of public issues.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to implement five multi-day seminars for twenty-five Class XII LEAD Fellows.

Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation

Amount Awarded: \$25,500.00

Project Name: Preservice Teacher Training for Agriculture and Environmental Literacy

Project Summary: Agriculture plays a vital role in Maryland's economy and in the daily lives of Marylanders, yet many of today's students are unaware of their personal connection to and reliance upon agriculture for their most basic needs. In the classroom, agriculture can support and connect to nearly every subject area, enabling classroom teachers to engage students through active, hands-on learning lessons with real-life applications. The University of Maryland and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation have developed and piloted an online preservice educator agriculture and environmental literacy course. This course focuses on increasing the use of agriculture as the context for instruction of core content areas by teaching future educators about agriculture's importance to our society while providing them with quality resources, standard-aligned lessons, and educationally sound teaching methods to easily incorporate agriculture into their future classroom instruction.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) student travel stipend; b) meals for on the farm workshops; c) materials and resources for classroom usage per student; d) Adobe Captivate and Articulate 360 subscriptions; e) consultant services for an independent contractor to aid in development of coursework; f) administration of the grant.

Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation**Amount Awarded: \$44,970.00****Project Name: Building Foundations for Agricultural Education**

Project Summary: This project has built strong foundations for three agricultural education programs across the State - Sabillasville Environmental School in Frederick County, High Point High School in Prince George's County, and McDonough High School in Charles County. Sabillasville Environmental School and High Point High School have enhanced their outdoor learning capacity through this grant. Sabillasville Environmental School, a new K-6 charter school, has built a new outdoor classroom area that includes a learning cottage, outdoor learning tools and equipment as well as tables and benches for students to complete work. High Point High School has constructed a new high tunnel to be used as a green house in order to create an agricultural education and literacy program. McDonough High School focused on enhancing agricultural education and updating their equipment. The students at McDonough were using outdated equipment and this project focused on funding new equipment for the school's agriculture program. These investments have allowed students to become better prepared for careers in agriculture and environmental sciences. The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation is facilitating this grant to support agricultural education and agricultural literacy in Maryland. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due to delay in installing the new high tunnel at High Point High School in Prince Georges County. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the materials and supplies to a) construct a 12'x24' learning cottage at Sabillasville Enviromental School that includes a vinyl A-Frame shed with windows, gables, porch nook, shingled roof, ventilation, site preparation and delivery as well as picnic tables, dry erase boards, and workspaces; b) a new "high tunnel" style of green house and supplies to outfit to industry standards for High Point High School; c) purchase two (2) O2 gas sensors, five (5) temperature sensors and pH sensors for McDonough High School; and d) administration of the grant.

Maryland Forestry Foundation**Amount Awarded: \$20,000.00****Project Name: Alignment**

Project Summary: The Maryland Forestry Foundation promotes stewardship, conservation, and sustainable use of Maryland's forest resources throughout the State. Trees have multi-benefits when harvested but the crucial need is the "alignment" of incentives for good forest management to preserve and strengthen the air, water, habit, climate, social and recreational values of healthy forest cover. The economic future of forestry is not confined to traditional forest markets but must be viewed in the context of all the benefits ascribed to healthy forest cover and good forest stewardship. This project framed a strategy to align and support how forest landowners can be compensated for the ecological benefits of forest stewardship. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due to time challenges in order to complete the research and interviews for the white paper. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support the a) research and development of a white paper; b) a conference; c) marketing and outreach; and, d) dissemination of the report.

Maryland Forests Association, Inc.**Amount Awarded: \$25,000.00****Project Name: EAS Implementation Coordination & Assistance**

Project Summary: Maryland Forest Association, Inc. (MFA) is a state-wide nonprofit organization whose mission is to conserve and enhance forests in the State. This project focuses on developing responsive strategies to the

Maryland Forestry Economic Adjustment Strategy (EAS). The EAS assesses the impacts on community and industry caused by negative consequences of the forestry sector's decline and makes recommendations for both industry and community-level economic recovery. MFA has implemented the following EAS initiatives: 1) Increase the knowledge of public and policymakers about the forest products industry; 2) Foster a more supportive state and local policy environment; 3) Improve supply-chain coordination; 4) Expand the use of renewable biomass energy; 5) Enhance Maryland forest product industry's export competitiveness; 6) Support entrepreneurial success for wood product businesses; and 7) Expand domestic marketing opportunities. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due a delay in collating the forestry directory. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) Association of Forest Industries consulting services; b) Faces of Forestry public awareness campaign associated costs; c) directory design and layout, d) printing costs; e) meals and meeting expenses; f) administration of the grant.

Maryland Horse Foundation

Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00

Project Name: Phase I: 2023 Maryland Horse Census Data Collection

Project Summary: The Maryland Horse Foundation was chartered in 1988 by the Maryland Horse Breeders Association to serve various educational and charitable needs of Maryland's horse industry. This project focuses on conducting a 2023 economic impact study on Maryland's horse industry and assist in the cost for the 2024 Maryland Horse Forum. The study examines the effect that the equine industry has on the economy and measures changes in business revenue, business profits, personal wages and jobs. The dissemination of the economic impact data is a centerpiece of the Forum that will be held in August 2024. Approximately 300 state officials and the industry stakeholders are expected to attend the one-day symposium. This event has been held every five years since 2004.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the 2023 Maryland Horse Industry Economic Impact Study and the costs associated with producing the 2024 Maryland Horse Forum.

Steam Onward, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$17,500.00

Project Name: More Than Farming

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. Steam Onward produced and distribute statewide, a series called "More Than Farming" (MTF), a series of short (10–15 minutes each) pre-collegiate documentary videos. The videos are directed to pre-collegiate youth considering careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) as well as careers in agriculture and natural resources. The major focuses of the MTF series reveal: 1) the diversity of careers related to agriculture, not just farming, 2) the diversity of technology utilized in agriculture and natural resources, and 3) the diversity of people engaged. *Awardee has been approved a 3 month extension in order to complete the filming during the summer months. The new grant period end date is 9.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the creation of a) short documentary videos a) contractual services of the More Than Farming Project Director, Videographer, and Interviewers; b) materials and supplies (batteries, photo lamps, memory cards, paper, ink, notebooks, post-it notes, staples and tape); c) rental of a vehicle to transport video crew and interviewers; d) video editing services;

e) food on location; f) marketing and promotions; g) DVD duplication; h) online social media boosting; and i) website fees.

Western Maryland RC&D

Amount Awarded: \$35,000.00

Project Name: Maryland Fuel Wood Supply Chain Study

Project Summary: The Maryland Wood Fuel Supply Analysis has provided a detailed county-by-county look at the current state of forests in Maryland today and how much fuel-grade wood is currently being generated. Most importantly, it has given a 5 and 10-year projections for forest growth and health using three different scenarios based on the demand for fuel-grade wood. This projection can be used as a reference for policymakers in crafting policies related to wood energy and forestry practices and allocating funding opportunities to these sectors to ensure that Maryland reaches its forest health goals. Additionally, this analysis can help those who already work in the wood energy and/or forestry field. Foresters and loggers are now able to pin-point specific areas that are in the greatest need of forest management. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension in order to have additional time to promote the Maryland Fuelwood Supply Chain analysis. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has being expended to support a) consultant services to complete the analysis and b) administration of the grant.

Community and Economic Development - 21 Grant Award Projects- \$529,369

Aaron's Place, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$36,000.00

Project Name: Soup Kitchen Hood

Project Summary: Aaron's Place, Inc provides services to underserved communities located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Their clients include children, families, senior citizens, homeless, mentally ill, working poor, domestic violence victims and anyone else who faces food insecurity, and can benefit from the services they offer. They currently serve approximately 24,000 people annually through their food and assistance programs which includes but not limited to, housing and utility assistance, English as a Second Language programs, senior meal delivery, job readiness training and computer literacy. They also operate a food rescue from local farms and food stores, collecting donated foods from establishments to distribute to local pantries. This project has focused on building their Soup Kitchen by installing a hood range system. The Soup Kitchen will serve as a location to serve free hot meals and will be used as a training ground to inspire new chefs/entrepreneurs. *Awardee has been approved a 1 year extension due to an upgraded required for the fire supression system related to the new kitchen hood. The new grant period end date is 6.30.2024.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a hood range system with fire suppression for the stove at the Soup Kitchen.

Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity - Alpha Theta Education Foundation

Amount Awarded: \$1,000.00

Project Name: A Business Plan for Success - The Maryland Agriculture Innovation Center

Project Summary: The vision for the Maryland Agriculture Innovation Center (MAI) is to establish a workforce development program that will elevate collegiate participants' soft skills and opportunities for job placement

with an emphasis made on recruiting rural-based collegiates or those students intending on moving to rural Maryland for employment. Once established, MAI will be based out of the University of Maryland College Park.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support consultant services to develop MAI branding.

Bay Community Support Services, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$15,400.00

Project Name: Immediate Home Repair Needs for Intellectually Disabled and Laptops for Staff in 2 Rural Counties

Project Summary: Bay Community Support Services (Bay-CSS) provides personalized services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in Southern and Central Maryland. This project addresses the emergency repairs of potentially hazardous household deficiencies, including the replacement of hot water heaters, HVAC closet remediation and repair, and electrical panel replacement. These repairs took place at four residential group homes for the intellectually and developmentally disabled located in Charles and St. Mary's Counties. Funding was also used to replace inoperable major daily living appliances, such as ovens, refrigerators, and dishwashers for the same four homes.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) 2 HVAC closet remediation, a hot water heater replacement, replacement of inoperable, dry rotted windows, and the installation of a dishwasher, washer/dryer set, 2 toaster ovens, a refrigerator, oven and microwave at their Charles County residences; b) an electrical panel replacement, installation of a dishwasher, oven, refrigerator, and a countertop replacement at a St. Mary's residence.

Beach to Bay Heritage Area

Amount Awarded: \$30,000.00

Project Name: Marketing the Beach to Bay Heritage Area

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 developed a blueprint for the Beach to Bay Heritage Area organization to successfully fill the heritage tourism niche by 1) coordinating with the other state destination marketing organizations and non-profits in their heritage area to identify, produce and promote the missing heritage tourism programming and 2) promote events so that their region can engage a larger audience, expand the reach of all cooperating organizations, and successfully attract more heritage tourism dollars.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) media purchases; b) Augmented Reality creation and production; c) Delmarva Public Media programming; d) graphic design; and e) photography.

Caroline County Historical Society

Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00

Project Name: Caroline Agriculture Interpretive Center

Project Summary: This project focuses on the Agriculture Center in Caroline County, which has had no dominant industry for 360 years apart from commercial agriculture. This project will tell the story of the difficult nature of local commercial agriculture, particularly it's boom-and-busts cycles over 360 years due to a vast array of foreign and domestic factors that included the McCormick reaper, Erie Canal, B&O Railroad, corn laws, circular saws, "yellows" fruit virus and World Wars. The Center is also the starting point for a trail through Caroline County and

three adjacent counties to view the buildings, artifacts, and landscapes of commercial agriculture. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due unexpected event. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) interpretive products such as brochures, graphic design, and signage; b) exterior heat and cold resistant television; c) contractor installation of signage; d) television wall bracket and video thumb drives; and d) shipping costs.

Chesapeake Audubon Society-Pickering Creek Audubon Center

Amount Awarded: \$11,590.00

Project Name: Telling the Story of Delmarva's Wild Habitats on Pickering Creek's Farm to Bay Trail

Project Summary: Pickering Creek Audubon Center conserves natural habitats on Maryland's Eastern Shore by engaging and empowering their community through exploration, education, and stewardship. This project focused on improvements to the Center's Farm to Bay Trail. The primary purpose of the project replaced eight interpretive panels on the trail. These panels give visitors a good sense of the most common habitats in the area and how they interact.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) the purchase of the 9 (nine) interpretive panels with frames and bases; b) consultant services for sign design; c) installation; and d) administration of the grant.

Chesapeake Center, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$30,000.00

Project Name: DSP credentialing through National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals, Inc.

Project Summary: Chesapeake Center, Inc. and Chesterwy Center, Inc. empowers individuals with disabilities to become active members of the community by expanding vocational, recreational, housing, and opportunities. This project has built capacity through workforce development to achieve greater recruitment and retention by increasing the skills and professionalism of the workforce at both of the Centers. Twenty-seven seasoned and newly hired staff were required to complete up to 50 hours of the accredited Maryland Direct Support Professional (DSP) training to achieve DSP II certification through the State. *Awardee has been approved a 3 month extension so that the second cohort can complete the training in August 2023 and post work (survey, assess new hire, recognition program) can be completed. The new grant period end date is 9.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) wage enhancements for twenty-seven DSP II completers; b) six laptop computers; c) supplies for DSP II graduation event.

Chesapeake Culinary Center

Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00

Project Name: Shore Gourment Mobile

Project Summary: The Shore Gourmet mobile (ShoGo Mobile) is a curbside market that brings fresh produce, prepared meals, and groceries to various location in Caroline County and Talbot County. This project supported the purchase of a second vehicle to serve to use a ShoGo Mobile as the first one has reached its capacity. This project supports local producers by utilizing their products, increases income for the working poor and provides residents with affordable, easy meal options in their community. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due delay in receiving vehicle. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support the purchase of a vehicle and associated costs related to maintenance, insurance, and fuel.

Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$25,000.00

Project Name: ChesMRC Satellite Office Federalsburg Maryland

Project Summary: The Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center (ChesMRC) empowers people from different cultures to become successful and engaged members of their community. While the organization serves anyone who requests assistance, they primary focus on helping limited english proficient individuals to successfully integrate into the community. Through this grant, the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center, Inc. has expanded its services and established a satellite office in Caroline County. The purpose of the office is to connect with more immigrants and immigrant groups, especially in the Haitian community. The office provides direct immigration, health insurance, benefits, and language services, as well as develop and train Haitian Creole staff to provide quality and effective services for the community.

The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the salary and wages of ChesMRC staff and a Haitian Creole interpreter.

Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore

Amount Awarded: \$25,000.00

Project Name: Mission Possible Nonprofit Coaching and Consulting

Project Summary: The Lower Shore of Maryland is home to hundreds of active nonprofits organizations that provide critical services to vulnerable and underserved residents in their rural geography. The services they provide generate thousands of jobs, rally countless volunteers, and generate millions of dollars for the economy. Mission Possible is a capacity building program that matches and underwrites expert consultants, coaches, facilitators, and support staff to focus on strategic challenges of small to medium sized nonprofits on the Lower Shore of Maryland.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to a) pay for the direct services of expert consultants, facilitators, and trainers; b) membership underwriting services; and c) materials and supplies that include educational books and workbooks.

Community Mediation Maryland

Amount Awarded: \$33,750.00

Project Name: Community Mediation Corps - Rural Mediation Centers

Project Summary: Community Mediation Maryland advances 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 has focused on placing eight full-time AmeriCorps members in community mediation centers in twelve 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, has been expended to support the stipends for eight Americorps members.

Delmarva Community Services

Amount Awarded: \$26,325.00

Project Name: Sprouts Early Childhood Learning Center at Chesapeake Grove Furnishings

Project Summary: Delmarva Community Services, Inc. (DCS) is a multi-service, non-profit agency that helps people who wished to maintain dignity and an independent lifestyle within their rural community on the Delmarva Peninsula. The Sprouts Early Childhood Learning Center at the newly built Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Intergenerational Center in Cambridge, MD has provides care for up to 60 children, including those aged 6 weeks to 4 years, and for those aged 5-11 for before school, after school, and summer enrichment programs. The Center is open from 7am – 6pm Monday through Friday. It has the full use of the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Intergenerational Center. This includes a 2,500 square foot space dedicated for childcare, as well as the use of the 2,300 square foot atrium, the computer lab, and the outdoor playground.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the purchase of furnishings for the Sprouts Early Childhood Center. Items include chairs, tables, coat/hat hooks, rugs, changing tables, cribs, play sets, sand/water table, play kitchen and storage bins.

Fair Hill Environmental Foundation, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$8,500.00

Project Name: Build FHNC's Volunteer Program Capacity

Project Summary: The Fair Hill Environmental Foundation inspires stewardship and community through outdoor environmental education. The Foundation operates the Fair Hill Nature Center (FHNC) located within 5,600 acres of Natural Resources Management Area in Cecil County. This project strengthened their volunteer program by hiring a Volunteer Maryland Coordinator to recruit and train volunteers to assist with the FHNC programming.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the stipend for the Volunteer Maryland Coordinator position.

Fair Hill International, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$25,000.00

Project Name: Development of New Cross Country Courses at Fair Hill NRMA's Gallaher Road Site

Project Summary: Fair Hill International's mission is to conduct and promote amateur and professional equestrian competitions, clinics, and special events to develop Eventing, Combined Driving and Endurance Riding from beginner through national and international levels. This project focused on creating new Cross Country courses for the United States Equestrian Federation and the United States Eventing Association Recognized Horse Trials competitions held in the Gallaher Road area of the Fair Hill Natural Resource Management Area in Cecil County, MD. These offerings have attracted competitors from Maryland, as well as riders from the entire East Coast and Canada to test their skills and training of their mounts.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the construction of the new cross county courses and includes the design, engineering, regrading, building water complexes and new jumps.

Garrett College Foundation

Amount Awarded: \$35,000.00

Project Name: Workforce Development: Culinary Program Development

Project Summary: The Workforce Development: Culinary Program Development project, enabled Garrett College to create a culinary laboratory at its Career Technical Training Center. As is true in many areas, Garrett County

faces workforce shortages and this has become particularly critical in the restaurant and hospitality business which is a major industry. The County hosts over 1.2 million visitors annually and, as a four-season travel destination, relies on a strong workforce to serve those visitors. Upon completion of the lab, a new program will be launched focusing on incumbent workers, new graduates and job seekers, those who successfully complete the training will be eligible to test for an industry recognized credential. *Awardee has been approved a 3 month extension due to disruptions in the supply chain for the kitchen equipment. The new grant period end date is 9.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support the a) the purchase of the hood system for kitchen appliances; b) construction of the laboratory space; c) kitchen equipment such as but not limited to pots, pans, and utensils; d) installation of a fire suppression/sprinkler system.

Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna

Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00

Project Name: Habi-Tech Homes in Cecil and Harford Counties

Project Summary: Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna serves low-income families in Harford and Cecil Counties through their Home Ownership, Home Repair and Financial Literacy programs. Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna has partnered with Harford Technical High School and Cecil County School of Technology to build “Habi-Tech” homes to expand Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna's capacity to provide affordable, energy efficient homes for rural low-income families in both counties while also giving students an education in the latest construction technology. This program supports the students’ education by providing oversight, meeting the need for high school students to have “career ready” pathways that lead to good paying jobs after graduation.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the cost of construction materials that include to lumber, doors, windows, concrete, hardware, flooring, paint, insulation, drywall, cabinets, fixtures and lightbulbs.

Justice Jobs of Maryland

Amount Awarded: \$27,454.00

Project Name: Justice Jobs Expansion into Washington County with Tripartite Post-Hire Support and Mentorship

Project Summary: Justice for Jobs of Maryland (JJ) helps people with barriers to employment to get a job, keep the job, and move up to better jobs through their free employment and job retention program in Frederick County. This project has expanded JJ's programing to Washington County by partnering with Gatekeepers - a nonprofit organization that helps people reentering society from prison. An AmeriCorps member has built out JJ's Employer Program and recruits and supervises volunteers in Frederick and Hagerstown. A Global Necessity caseworker was hired part-time to work one-on-one with jobseekers. The inter-county collaboration between JJ and Gatekeepers has afforded each organization access to relationships in the respective counties, improved JJ's curriculum, provided Gatekeepers with additional employers, and developed JJ's post-hire mentorship.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) the stipend for AmeriCorps Member (ACM); b) travel and parking for ACM; c) a computer and software; d) a Global Necessity part-time caseworker; and e) indirect costs to manage the grant.

Mid Shore Community Mediation Center**Amount Awarded: \$14,950.00****Project Name: Building Capacity through AmeriCorps Partnerships**

Project Summary: Mid Shore Community Mediation Center provides no-cost conflict resolution services to residents in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot counties. This project focused on building capacity for the Center by covering the stipend for an Americorp member serving through ShoreCorps to serve 900 hours directly in their youth-focused conflict resolution programs and hiring a part-time Volunteer Liaison to manage their volunteer program that consisted of 20 volunteers.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the stipend for the ShoreCorps member and pay the salary for the Volunteer Liaison.

Minorities in Aquaculture**Amount Awarded: \$10,000.00****Project Name: Minorities On Course**

Project Summary: Minorities in Aquaculture, in collaboration with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration fisheries, and The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's Horn Point Lab, has established a one-year pilot program for their Minorities on Course (MOC) program. MOC was the first step in establishing a ten-year program to prepare minority women candidates for meaningful careers in aquaculture, Bay restoration and the preservation of the seafood industry. The Program has expanded the role of aquaculture while preserving traditional approaches to harvesting and processing seafood. It has responded to a need shared by counties and communities surrounding the Chesapeake Bay to preserve the Bay and the culture embodied by it. Development of the Program capitalizes on the importance of aquaculture as the fastest growing food system in the world and the acknowledgement of the lack of racial equity and inclusion along the spectrum of career related opportunities.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the development of the Minorities on Course program, which includes a) stipends for mentors and staff; b) participant travel; c) safety and personal equipment; and d) boat fuel.

The Ranch, Inc.**Amount Awarded: \$30,000.00****Project Name: Job Training Equipment**

Project Summary: The Ranch is an American Society of Addiction Medicine level 3.1 long-term (3-6 month) low-intensity residential treatment program for men in Maryland recovering from serious substance use disorders. The facility is located on a 204-acre farm in Frederick County that affords the opportunity to learn a variety of useful life skills, including operating machinery. The Ranch is in the process of undergoing a large reforestation project and this project trained residents to operate medium size equipment by purchasing a tractor and accessories to aid in the reforestation project.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the purchase of a medium-sized work tractor with hydraulic bucket loader and implements.

Energy – 2 Grant Award Projects Totaling \$60,700

Alliance for Green Heat

Amount Awarded: \$25,000.00

Project Name: Wood Energy Education Tours

Project Summary: The leading factor limiting the adoption of renewable thermal wood energy and support for sustainable forest management practices is misconceptions from legislators, environmental groups, and the public. After years of using a variety of educational tactics to inform these groups, the most impactful method has been in-person tours. This project focused on planning an implementing two tours that afforded attendees to see the wood energy systems and managed forests while speaking with the on-site experts who work with these operations daily. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due to timing based on wood energy operating seasons, the second tour will occur in November 2023. The first tour that took place in New Hampshire was successfully completed in March 2023. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) 2 educational tours with an average of 9 attendees per tour; and b) grant administration.

Easton Day Care Center, Inc dba Critchlow Adkins Children's Centers

Amount Awarded: \$35,700.00

Project Name: CACC Preschool Site Air Quality Improvement Project

Project Summary: Critchlow Adkins Children's Centers provides quality, financially accessible childcare for children and their families in a nurturing, diverse, safe, and enriching environment on the mid-Shore. This project focuses on updating the Heating, Ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) units at the Center's preschool site in Easton, Maryland. The older HVAC system was 18 years old, inefficient, and in need of regular repairs. The new HVAC units provide efficient, cleaner air circulation and improved control of air quality and temperature, reducing the potential for airborne transmission of COVID-19.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the purchase of four (4) HVAC systems units and associated duct work.

Rural Broadband - 1 Grant Award Projects - \$45,000

LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00

Project Name: Broadband for Southern Crossing

Project Summary: LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc. provides compassionate programs and services that meet the needs of those who are under-served in their southern Maryland communities. This project has provided broadband internet access for the remaining 13 units in the transitional housing project, Southern Crossing located in Newburg, Maryland. Southern Crossing offers housing for a total of 77 individuals as well as wraparound services by working with regional partners.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the installation of broadband services for 13 units at Southern Crossing located in Newburg, Maryland.

Youth Engagement & Leadership Development - 10 Grant Award Projects - \$138,664

Building African American Minds, Inc

Amount Awarded: \$16,399.00

Project Name: Youth Workforce Development Program

Project Summary: Building African American Minds (BAAM), Inc. partnered with ALL4LOVE, a startup nonprofit organization in Dorchester County, to provide a Youth Workforce Development Program to middle/high school students with a focus on math and English Language Arts (ELA) assessment and career-related services. Students received support, mentoring, internship opportunities, and job placements to reach their optimum goals. BAAM & ALL4LOVE partnered with Chesapeake College, the Workforce Investment Board, employers, and other community organizations such as Public Libraries, Public School Systems, Department of Social Services, Health Departments, and Behavioral Health Providers to deliver services to their program participants.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the Youth Workforce Development program materials, supplies, snacks, marketing and stipends.

Coming of Kings Inc.

Amount Awarded: \$10,000.00

Project Name: Inspiring future Leaders

Project Summary: Coming of Kings is a mentoring program designed to empower young men through leadership development in Harford and Cecil counties. This project has supported the development of at least 30 young men ages 10 to 19 through trips to cultural, nature, and education centers; the teaching of chess, tutoring, and financial literacy. The goal of the project was to grow young men into professional adults who are not at a disadvantage because of where they live and because of the valuable experiences they had while working with Coming of Kings. *Awardee has been approved a 3 month extension due unexpected event. The new grant period end date is 9.30.2023.*

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) travel for fieldtrips; b) materials and supplies; c) marketing; d) consultant services for tutors and guest speakers.

Dream Queen Foundation

Amount Awarded: \$32,000.00

Project Name: Gals Lead Teen Mentorship In/After School Club Program

Project Summary: The Dream Queen Foundation offers leadership development training for teen girls (she/her, they/them) in southern Maryland. The Foundation has provided a safe space where girls come together to align careers with passion and purpose and embrace authenticity in positions of power and influence. *Gals Lead* is their signature program for teens and provides participants with the tools they need to encourage mental wellness, battle bullying, and build self-confidence and clarity. There are currently four *Gals Lead* clubs, all based in Maryland. *Gals Lead* has hosted over 400 teen girls through these club programs and weekend retreats. Highlights of the program included guest speakers, vision boards, sister circle, and a certificate of completion for college or employment applications.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the startup costs for six (6) *Gals Lead* clubs that includes a) consultant services for a Program Facilitator and a Program Manager; b) materials and supplies for club exercises and vision boards; c) publications/documentations such as the books, workbooks, and completion certificates; and c) a software platform.

Furnace Town Foundation**Amount Awarded: \$5,000.00****Project Name: Historic Garden Enhancement**

Project Summary: Furnace Town Foundation's mission is to preserve, restore, and interpret the twenty-five acre Furnace Town Historic Site, a 19th-century village of the Nassawango Iron Furnace in Worcester County, Maryland. Furnace Town, in cooperation with the Future Farmers of America programs at local high schools, rehabilitated and restored Furnace Town's replica of a 19th century kitchen garden including the design and planting of the garden by high school students under the direction of their faculty advisors.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the supplies and materials for the project.

Garrett County Arts Council, Inc.**Amount Awarded: \$15,000.00****Project Name: \$SMART ART STEAM & Entrepreneurship Education**

Project Summary: The mission of the Garrett County Arts Council (GCAC) is to aid, encourage, advise, and coordinate activities dedicated to the promotion of cultural arts in Garrett County, and to integrate such activities into the life of their community. With the success of GCAC's \$SMART ART spaces, technology and programming, GCAC launched the \$SMART ART STEAM & Entrepreneurship Education programming. This program provided 1,988 students Grades 2-12 with immersive experiences to design, build and test ideas that solve problems for real customers and cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset. Students had the freedom to take their creative ideas and turn them into products/services to market. Students were active throughout the process and learned what it takes to start an entrepreneurial venture all while learning important leadership, teamwork, communication, and business skills.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) artists to teach educational and professional development programs; b) technology equipment and software to include a computer, a tablet, accessories and software; c) travel expenses for project staff to assist with regional programming training and replication; d) program marketing; e) program documentation to include an online survey tool, course materials and printing costs.

It Takes a Village to Help Our Children, Inc.**Amount Awarded: \$9,000.00****Project Name: Lower Shore Youth Sewing Entrepreneur Program**

Project Summary: It Takes a Village to Help Our Children, Inc. empowers local children to learn, to grow, to succeed by providing year-round access to high quality after-school and summer youth programs in a safe and stimulating environment. It Takes a Village to Help Our Children, Inc. partnered with Maryland 4-H to kick off the Lower Shore Youth Sewing Entrepreneur program. This program introduced youth from ages 8 to 18 to the life skill of sewing and making items and learning how to sell and market them.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) the purchase of twenty-one sewing machines, b) materials and supplies for sewing that include but may not be limited to a serger, cutting mats, scissors, cloth material, elastics and pins, c) two heavy duty locking cabinets.

Lower Shore Land Trust**Amount Awarded: \$21,000.00****Project Name: Training Future Leaders**

Project Summary: Lower Shore Land Trust (LSLT) protects and restores natural resources, wildlife habitat and working lands to support and connect healthy and vibrant communities in Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. This project trained two full-time Chesapeake Conservation Corp members to advance communications and on the ground restoration for LSLT.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the stipends and travel for two Chesapeake Conservation Corps members.

Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts**Amount Awarded: \$8,000.00****Project Name: Maryland Envirothon**

Project Summary: Educating tomorrow's decision-makers on the importance of conservation is vital to the health of our natural resources and the Chesapeake Bay. The Maryland Envirothon helps students become more involved in protecting natural resources by honing their problem-solving skills and instilling a sense of stewardship in these future leaders. Students learn about soils, wildlife, aquatics, forestry and a 5th issue that changes each year. In the 2022-2023 program students studied the 5th issue " Adapting to a Changing Climate." Students come together at the Maryland Envirothon Competition on June 15-16 at the Maryland 4-H Environmental Education & Camping Center, Garrett County, Maryland to test their knowledge in these areas. The three highest scoring teams earned college scholarships, and the first-place team represented Maryland at the International National Conservation Foundation Envirothon competition held around the United States or Canada.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the meals for the 2.5-day event.

Maryland FFA Foundation, Inc.**Amount Awarded: \$10,000.00****Project Name: Agriculture Education Grows Leaders**

Project Summary: The Maryland Future Farmers of America Foundation builds partnerships with industry, education, government, other foundations and individuals to secure financial resources that recognize local FFA member achievements, develop student leaders, and support the future of agricultural education in Maryland. This project supported students to attend 1 of 5 Regional Leadership Conferences held annually throughout the State. These conferences impact up to 1,000 students who participated in a leadership development programs associated with agricultural education.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the transportation for students from school districts across the State.

Off Street Sports Performance**Amount Awarded: \$12,265.00****Project Name: Off Street Sports Performance**

Project Summary: Off Street Sports Performance (OSSP) is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to empowering, teaching, and supporting underprivileged youth to prepare them for post-graduation success on

the Lower Easton Shore. OSSP's goal is to address the healthy development and promotion of positive physical, emotional, and social well-being of underprivileged youth after-school and in the summer months. This project focused on updating fitness equipment and provided technology for academic enrichment.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) the purchase of fitness equipment; and b) the purchase of two laptops.

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

