



# RURAL MARYLAND PROSPERITY INVESTMENT FUND

## ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2023



Cover photos courtesy of the following grantees - Enterprise Community Development, Inc. - Magnolia Gardens Housing Complex, Western Maryland Area Health Education Center - Exploring Careers in Health Occupations program; Howard County Economic Development - Rural Maryland Flower Cooperative; People for Change - Summer Career Enrichment Program

## 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 funding has increased since then to \$9 million in Fiscal Year 2023. The RMPIF program is funded through the State of Maryland’s Annual Operating Budget. In FY2023, the Grant Review Board awarded 37 grants totaling \$7,216,426.

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 \$750,000, the states’ five rural Regional Councils at \$3,000,000 (\$600,000/Council), as well as grant projects awards that focus on **rural entrepreneurship development, rural health care, and rural 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 FY2023 MAERDAF Annual Report for a list of MAERDAF grant projects funded by RMPIF. 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.

## Grant Decisions

The Rural Maryland Council serves as the administrative agency in receiving the applications and disbursing the funds. Grant award determinations are made by an 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

### RMPIF FY2023 Awards At-A-Glance

Focus Area	Number of Awards	Amount Awarded	Region Served	Number of Awards	Amount Awarded
Regional Councils	5	\$3,000,000	Eastern Shore (Nine County Region-Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset)	17	\$3,593,219
Infrastructure	7	\$1,530,558	Southern (Three County Region-Charles, Calvert, St. Mary’s)	5	\$1,228,750
Entrepreneurship	8	\$ 1,144,748	Western (Five County Region-Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, Carroll)	14	\$2,349,457
Health Care	17	\$ 1, 541,120	Statewide	1	\$45,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>\$7,216,426</b>		<b>37</b>	<b>\$7,216,426</b>

**Regional Councils: 5 Grants = \$3,000,000**

<b>Awardee</b>	<b>Total Award</b>
Mid-Shore Regional Council	\$600,000
Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore	\$600,000
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland	\$600,000
Tri-County Council for Western Maryland	\$600,000
Upper Shore Regional Council	\$600,000

**RMPIF Entrepreneurship: 8 Grants = \$1,144,748**

<b>Awardee</b>	<b>Total Award</b>
Carroll Community College	\$250,000
Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center	\$200,000
Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc.	\$135,000
Frostburg State University	\$143,500
Howard County Economic Development Authority	\$65,248
People for Change Coalition	\$90,000
The Greater Cumberland Committee	\$175,000
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	\$86,000

**RMPIF Infrastructure: 7 Grants = \$1,530,558**

<b>Awardee</b>	<b>Total Award</b>
Allegany College of Maryland	\$250,000
Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County	\$81,808
Calvert County Government - Economic Development	\$100,000
Dorchester County Economic Development	\$380,000
Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center	\$100,000
Enterprise Community Development, Inc.	\$500,000
Town of Boonsboro	\$118,750

**RMPIF Health Care: 17 Grants = \$1,541,120**

<b>Awardee</b>	<b>Total Award</b>
Brook Lane Health Services	\$150,000
Casa Della Fenice, Inc/ dba Reflection House	\$200,000
Chesapeake Housing Mission Inc.	\$15,000
Choptank Community Health System, Inc.	\$158,000
Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center	\$75,000
For All Seasons, Inc.	\$150,000
Fort Ritchie Community Center, Inc.	\$40,000
Garrett County Health Department	\$127,151

<b>Awardee</b>	<b>Total Award</b>
Habitat For Humanity Of Wicomico County, Inc.	\$75,000
Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Incorporated	\$10,000
Maryland Emergency Medicine Network	\$175,000
Partners for Care	\$45,000
The Arc Southern Maryland	\$18,750
The Benedictine School for Exceptional Children Foundation Incorporated	\$87,750
TidalHealth	\$187,775
Town of Millington	\$13,694
Western Maryland Area Health Education Center (dba AHEC West)	\$13,000

### **Returned Grant Funds**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Award Amount</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Town of Millington	Northern Kent County Transportation	\$13,694	Unable to complete project

## **Entrepreneurship – 8 Grant Award Projects - \$1,144,748**

**Carroll Community College**

**Amount Awarded: \$250,000.00**

**Project Name: SPARK! - Sustainable Professions, Apprenticeships, Reigniting, Knowledge**

Project Summary: Carroll Community Colleges (CCC) is building a Regional Electric Vehicle (EV) Repair and Maintenance Program that focuses on building a highly skilled EV workforce that will be accessible to potential workers throughout the state via seat-sharing agreements with partner community colleges. It also established a Green Business Incubation Center that has supported entrepreneurs establishing green businesses and enabled existing businesses to evolve to leverage and benefit from a green economy. During the grant period, CCC has focused on capacity building, to include: buildout of an electrical/EV laboratory; established an EV Repair and Maintenance curriculum and program; established an EV registered apprenticeship program; created a Pathways to Entrepreneurship program that includes courses tailored to EV and green business; created a Statewide Green Business Incubation Center, and established an EV Tool repository. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due to outstanding procurement requests for the EV lab. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The RMPF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support the salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for the SPARK! Training Director, Curriculum Developer, Apprenticeship Coordinator, Lab Tech, EV Instructure; b) EV ProPlus Train the Trainer course delivery and instructor; c) Tool Repository that includes diagnostic computers for 7 manufacturers, hand tools, tool chest, and lab equipment; d) renovation costs for electrical upgrades, new flooring, and branding room wrap and paint; e) facilities/IT support; f) Furniture; g) associated travel cost for EV Pro Plus professional development.

**Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC)**

**Amount Awarded: \$200,000.00**

**Project Name: Chesapeake Ag Innovation Center - The Startup Program**

Project Summary: The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) administers and implements the Chesapeake Ag Innovation Center (CAIC), a program-based initiative that provides access and delivers technical assistance to value-added producers, helping them start and scale their business, and increase acquisition of customers, sales, revenue, production, and investment. The Startup Program targeted idea- and a early-stage value-added producers by offering a comprehensive menu of technical assistance (videos, fact sheets, online quizzes, 1-on-1 mentoring, workshops, webinars, and other online resources) for self-learning and in-person sessions. This Program has provided up to 850 interactions with producers, preparing them for further assistance in CAIC's Growth Program as well as access to loans and investment.

The RMPF grant award, along with matching funds, was expended to support a) a website designer, a media consultant, and a grant writer; b) outreach, cross marketing, and programs for partner organizations; c) program development, delivery, and mentoring with South East Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.; d) annual event/fair costs such as food, awards, keynote speaker, venue, and marketing; e) salary, wages and fringe benefits for the CAIC Program Director, ESEC Loan Client Representative, CAIC Entrepreneur-In-Residence/Investment Advisor, and the Value-Added Industry Consultant.

**Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc.**

**Amount Awarded: \$135,000.00**

**Project Name: Building Agroforestry Entrepreneurship & Workforce Opportunity Development in Rural Frederick County**

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 Building Agroforestry Entrepreneurship & Workforce Opportunity Development in Rural Frederick County project has developed and expanded a supportive labor force, skilled in the technical aspect of both forestry and agriculture and engaged in innovative thinking committed to maintaining and expanding this valuable economic resource in Maryland. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension to allow time for recruiting early-stage companies into the accelerator program. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The RMPPIF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) salary, wages, and fringe benefits for the Project Manager; b) equipment to outfit rural spoke model training and the ed/lab; c) 1099 trainers; and d) publications and documentation for training modules that include videos and webinars.

**Frostburg State University**

**Amount Awarded: \$143,500.00**

**Project Name: Remote Work Center and Center for Product Design and Manufacturing**

Project Summary: The Remote Work Center (RWC) and Center for Product Design and Manufacturing (CPDM) at Frostburg University (FSU) have established the Center for Excellence Innovation Park. The goal of the Center is to bridge the gap between FSU and industry needs by deploying solutions for commercialization through integrated design and manufacturing projects and processes. The vision is to develop an advanced design and manufacturing center that supports industrial innovation through product design, prototyping, and manufacturing with state-of-the-art machining and design facilities and real-world educational opportunities. The RWC procured jobs that can be done from the facility, provided training in IT and technologies used for remote work; oral and written communication training; and, and employability skills training. The RWC included employment or re-entry to work opportunities for substance use disorder (SUD) individuals.

The RMPPIF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to cover a) regional travel to market the program; b) equipment that includes security cameras, key lock systems with card swipe and smart keys; c) construction costs for upfitting the RWC and CPDM space and included building interior walls, painting, and carpeting installation; and d) materials and supplies that included furniture, computers, conferencing equipment, Smart TVs, copiers and printers.

**Howard County Economic Development Authority**

**Amount Awarded: \$65,248.00**

**Project Name: Chesapeake Flower Exchange**

Project Summary: The Chesapeake Flower Exchange provides fresh, seasonal flowers and foliage grown in Maryland to retail flower shops and floral designers while helping rural Maryland flower farmers become financially sustainable through increased sales. While 80 percent of flowers sold in the United States are imported, demand for American-grown products has seen a tremendous increase due to COVID-19 shutdowns, supply issues, and catastrophic weather events. The Chesapeake Flower Exchange

benefits customers by offering a wider variety and greater quantity of local products, and a more consistent availability of locally grown flowers. Streamlining marketing, ordering, and payment benefits the farmers by increasing sales.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, was expended to support the following a) a Coolbot outdoor insulated stand-alone cooler; b) a portable cooler for deliveries; c) wheeled shelving units and five gallon buckets to transport flowers; d) garden supplies in the form of snips, gloves, and rubber bands; e) laptop computer and printer; f) Zoom license and membership fee; g) travel for members to deliver product, airfare and hotel accommodations for two staff to attend the Association of Special Cut Flower Growers Annual Conference; h) training for staff and member farms to include gardeners workshop and other relevant webinar; i) Annual Membership for the Association of Special Cut Flowers Growers; and, j) Annual consultant services in form of legal, accounting, electric, and social media.

### **People for Change Coalition**

**Amount Awarded: \$90,000.00**

**Project Name: Summer Career Enrichment Program**

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 a 4-week summer enrichment program that enrolled 109 middle school students from Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot Counties during the summer of 2022. The program exposed students to careers in engineering, programming, aviation, and construction.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) the salary and wages for the project management and instructional teaching; b) marketing/graphics/presentation design; c) supplies and materials for chess, drones, legos, flash drives, Ipad minis; d) Instructional materials, certificates, printing, and manuals; and e) lodging, meals, and travel.

### **The Greater Cumberland Committee**

**Amount Awarded: \$175,000.00**

**Project Name: Western Maryland Resource Based Industries ESG Brand Launch**

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. TGCC developed an auditable program that enables local food, agriculture, and forest products companies to expand access to markets currently closed to them and to satisfy Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) requirements that are being developed in the finance and insurance industries. By using the GroupGAP model from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, TGCC believes that it can support small and medium sized businesses by lowering the certification and auditing costs of ESG programs. This program has ensured these businesses have access to financing and also open up market access to downstream companies that also need to fulfill ESG obligations.

The RMPPIF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) consultant services to help prepare the Articles of Organization and the IRS form 1022 to create a not-for-profit entity; b) marketing and brand development; and, c) licensed software to aid in developing and application programming interface.

**University of Maryland Eastern Shore**

**Amount Awarded: \$86,000.00**

**Project Name: UMES Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

Project Summary: The University of Maryland of the Eastern Shore Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation established itself as a hub of resources for students, alumni, faculty, and the community - a place where entrepreneurs engaged in hands-on workshops designed to build their startup, explore business growth, and protect their internet protocol and assets. Services and resources developed during this project were offered free of charge to make the Center accessible to all stakeholders. The Center also housed a maker's space conducive to prototyping, branding, and small-scale production.

The RMPPIF grant award, along with matching funds, have been expended to support a) equipment that includes a LX610 color label and die cut printer, a LX910 color label printer, a AP362 label applicator, an edible ink printer, a RW-12 label rewinder; b) technology that includes two 84" Microsoft Surface Hubs (includes a monitor, stand and accessories), and twelve entrepreneur workstations; and c) indirect costs to administer the grant.

**Health Care – 17 Grant Award Projects - \$1,541,120**

**Brook Lane Health Services**

**Amount Awarded: \$150,000.00**

**Project Name: Western Maryland Behavioral Health Services Expansion**

Project Summary: Brook Lane is a non-profit health facility whose mission is to help individuals improve their emotional and behavioral well-being through education and treatment. This project focuses on Brook Lane expanding their child and adolescent mental health counseling and psychiatric services to the western panhandle of Maryland via a new office in Cumberland, Maryland. Once established, services provided will include evaluations, individual and family counseling, psychiatry care, and coordination with other partners to ensure strong continuity of care. *Awardee has been approved a 1 year extension due delay in moving into the office space. The new grant period end date is 6.30.2024.*

The RMPPIF grant award, along with matching funds, are being expended to support the a) salary, wages, and fringe benefits of two therapists and one medical assistant; b) lease expense for office space in Cumberland, Maryland; c) computers, printers, additional technology expenses; d) utilities; e) signage; f) marketing; g) furniture expenses for the new office space including desks, staff chairs, and patient chairs.

**Casa Della Fenice, Inc/ dba Reflection House**

**Amount Awarded: \$200,000.00**

**Project Name: Reflection House**

Project Summary: Casa Della Fenice, Inc/ dba Reflection House is a new nonprofit organization that aims to provide recovery housing for up to 16 women in Garrett County, Maryland. This project focuses on initial startup costs to lease a facility, establish necessary permits and certifications, equip administrative



office, initiate recovery house renovations, finalize programmatic plans and secure one core staff member. *Awardee has been approved a 1 year extension in order to find an adequate facility for the rehabilitating house for women. The new grant period end date is 6.30.2024.*

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to a) renovate the facility; b) purchase equipment, and appliances for facility; c) cellular and WiFi service connectivity; d) utilities; e) trash disposal; f) housekeeping and supplies; g) Board Governance training; h) permits and training certifications; and j) salary, wages, and fringe benefits for one staff member.

**Chesapeake Housing Mission, Inc.**

**Amount Awarded: \$15,000.00**

**Project Name: Making homes warmer, safer, drier and healthier**

Project Summary: Chesapeake Housing Mission (CHM) provides vital housing repair services through Christian Mission to low-income families living in the Chesapeake Region. CHM has partnered with regional contractors who are licensed to provide skilled home repair services for free or significantly discounted labor services associated with complex home repairs on at least 16 (sixteen) homes. These repairs have been performed in the homes of low-income families in the rural Maryland counties of Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, were been expended to support a) significantly reduced labor costs to perform the repairs on sixteen homes; and b) the salary, wages, and fringe benefits of staff working on administration/oversight, project evaluation and planning, documentation and permitting.

**Choptank Community Health System, Inc.**

**Amount Awarded: \$158,000.00**

**Project Name: Behavior Modification and Care Coordination to Improve Outcomes in Patients with Chronic Disease**

Project Summary: Choptank Community Health System, Inc. provides access to exceptional, comprehensive, and integrated health care for all. The *Behavior Modification and Care Coordination to Improve Outcomes in Patients with Chronic Disease* project focuses on providing primary care in Chestertown, Kent County. CCHS has implement team-based care for patients with diabetes and hypertension that have successfully improved outcomes at their existing centers. The Team consists of a nurse care coordinator and a community health worker who have worked with patients to develop a self-management plan to improve their health outcomes. Integrated Behavioral Health providers are available for patients who continue to struggle with the management of unhealthy behaviors despite health coaching and Care Navigators who focus on Chronic Care Management for Medicare patients. The program includes an interpreter to reach their non-English speaking patients.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the salary, wages, and fringe benefits of the following full-time employees - one Care Coordinator, one Community Health Worker, one Behavioral Health Specialist, one Care Navigator, and 1 one Medical Interpreter

**Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center**

**Amount Awarded: \$75,000.00**

**Project Name: REACH - Eastern Shore Wellness Community Outreach**

Project Summary: Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center's (ESAHEC) provides educational services and programs to assist Eastern Shore communities in the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals. The REACH - Eastern Shore Wellness Community Outreach initiative has used the Community Health Worker (CHW) model to deliver screenings and education to the target population in order to eliminate health inequities, improve health outcomes, and close disparity gaps so that every resident has the tools and power to achieve optimal health. ESAHEC has used two part-time CHWs to deliver culturally relevant healthcare services, screenings, education, outreach and a list of local resources connecting rural Eastern Shore residents with medical, environmental, and social services. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due to change in staffing. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The RMPHF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) contractual part-time services and travel for two Community Health Workers; b) contractual services for a Data Analyst to analyze program evaluations and metrics; c) cost to cover six speaker fees; d) market and program promotion; e) materials and supplies; and, f) salaries, wages & fringe benefits for staff administering the program.

**For All Seasons, Inc.**

**Amount Awarded: \$150,000.00**

**Project Name: Crisis appointments, Open Access and Transforming Service Delivery at For All Seasons**

Project Summary: For All Seasons, Inc. is the largest licensed behavioral health and rape crisis center serving the five counties of Maryland's Mid-Shore without regard to one's ability to pay. For All Seasons, Inc. implemented a new model of care that has resulted in a more streamlined and client-centered process that is more sustainable for their agency, with better client outcomes. The program has ultimately eliminated wait lists, and provides faster access to psychiatric services to anyone who comes to the agency, and increase both efficiencies and service revenue. This new system resulted in an increased capacity for the agency to serve more clients, capture more service income, and provide existing clients with more focused care. Overall, people in crises have gained access to the full range of our services more quickly and efficiently.

The RMPHF grant award, along with matching funds, have been expended to support a) the trauma-certified clinical staffing, b) facilities, c) lost billable revenue, and) indirect administrative costs for the unfilled crisis appointments.

**Fort Ritchie Community Center, Inc.**

**Amount Awarded: \$40,000.00**

**Project Name: Rural Health Initiative**

Fort Ritchie Community 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 the quality of life for the residents and users of Fort Ritchie and surrounding communities. The Center continued to implement the Rural Health Initiative (RHI). The RHI addresses four key areas of need in Frederick and Washington Counties as identified through community needs assessments and include Health, Fitness, Social, and Youth. This initiative has

provided improved access to healthcare opportunities, fitness activities for residents of all ages, a social network for rural residents with special emphasis on senior citizens, and expanded youth programs for rural teens.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, have been expended to support a) fitness equipment to include an Integrity S Recumbent Bike, a ICG IC4 Upright Bike; a NuStep T4R Recumbent Elliptical; b) supplies for events, incentives, and educational activities; c) marketing and promotions; d) utilities and accounting services; e) salary, wages, and fringe benefits for the new full-time position, Director of Wellness.

**Garrett County Health Department**

**Amount Awarded: \$127,151.00**

**Project Name: Garrett County Behavioral Health Investment Project**

Project Summary: The Garrett County Health Department's mission is to promote, protect, and improve the health of citizens and visitors of the County. The Garrett County Behavioral Health Investment Project has focused on enhancing and sustaining the behavioral health services provided to Garrett County students from licensed mental health providers through Garrett County Behavioral Health in collaboration with Garrett County Public Schools.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, have been expended to support the salary, wages, and fringe benefits for 1.4 school-based Social Worker and 1 school-based Social Worker Supervisor.

**Habitat For Humanity Of Wicomico County, Inc.**

**Amount Awarded: \$75,000.00**

**Project Name: Healthy Homes Initiative**

Project Summary: The Healthy Homes Initiative project serves the interests of rural families in Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester counties by 1) enhancing the deployment of housing repairs and 2) promoting the health, safety and happiness of those impacted by poverty and asthma, COPD or lung cancers. This project improved access to health and medical care as well as offered access to critical home repairs that are linked as social determinants of health.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, have been expended to pay for construction materials for home repairs which included a new roof, window sills, bathroom and kitchen utilities, doors, and flooring.

**Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Incorporated**

**Amount Awarded: \$10,000.00**

**Project Name: Mental Health and Chronic Disease Awareness (Heart and Breast Cancer) for Women of Southern Maryland**

Project Summary: Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Incorporated (IPSMCC) is committed to increasing breast health and breast cancer prevention behaviors in the African American women and underserved women of Southern Maryland. IPSMCC has facilitated mental health awareness, heart health, breast health, and breast cancer educational events to promote preventive behaviors, and offer early detection opportunities and support for survivors. The goal of this project was to reach a minimum of 800 African-American women and underserved women in the Charles and St. Mary's counties through mental health awareness, heart health, breast health, and breast cancer

educational events and one-on-one follow-up correspondence (via phone call, postal mail, face-to-face, and email) with participants. This project reached 1,924 residents through its programming.

The RMPFIF grant award, along with matching funds, have been expended to support a) 6 (six) venue rentals; b) consultant services of panelists for the educational events; c) marketing and events promotion; d) materials and supplies.

**Maryland Emergency Medicine Network**

**Amount Awarded: \$175,000.00**

**Project Name: The Maryland Emergency Medicine Network Eastern Shore Telehealth Expansion**

Project Summary: The Maryland Emergency Medicine Network staffs Emergency Departments (ED) for the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS). This project has expanded the established and proven Maryland Emergency Medicine Network (MEMN) and University of Maryland Medical System telehealth efforts into five counties on Maryland's rural Eastern Shore utilizing a remote provider in triage program (TeleTriage). TeleTriage workflows have demonstrated success in reducing ED patient burden and distributing physician resources across multiple sites at a distance. The program is flexible and responds to demand across multiple facilities in real-time. The UMMS/MEMN team of physician experts addressed patient care, resource management, and cost savings needs. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension in order to expend the grant award. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The RMPFIF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to pay for the salary and fringe benefits for dedicated telehealth time for the Maryland Emergency Medicine Network Emergency Department physicians.

**Partners In Care Maryland, Inc.**

**Amount Awarded: \$45,000.00**

**Project Name: Ride Partners**

Project Summary: Partners In Care's (PIC) Ride Partners Program has provided no-cost, door-through-door, arm-in-arm transportation for seniors 60+ to medical appointments, dental appointments, grocery stores, pharmacies, and for running errands, to name just a few examples. The program has allowed seniors to age in place and still remain an active part of their communities. Without PIC's Ride Partners Program, most of these seniors go without medical care, will not be able to get to the grocery store, become isolated, and experience other negative impacts of lack of transportation. PIC's goal is to provide services to even more of the fast-growing aging population, fill gaps in transportation for seniors, and help Maryland's older adults maintain active, healthy, and dignified lifestyles in their homes and communities they love. In FY2023, PIC provided 6,388 rides.

The MAERDAF grant award, along with matching funds, have been expended to support the salary, wages and fringe benefits of four full-time PIC staff.

**The Arc Southern Maryland**

**Amount Awarded: \$18,750.00**

**Project Name: My 25 - Healthy Choices for the People we Support**

Project Summary: The Arc Southern Maryland is the leading advocate for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living and working in Southern Maryland. The Arc provides an

array of services including housing, job placement, and behavioral support services. The enhanced nutrition program, *My25* project focused on improving the health and well-being of the people they serve in their 28 tri-county residential homes. *My25* is a person-centered choice mealtime and grocery shopping system that bolsters inexperienced staff and reduces key expenses. The program was created for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral needs, and physical challenges. In collaboration with the Feinberg School of Medicine and USDA, *My25's* team and technology addressed the needs regarding food preferences, overweight and underweight status, obesity, constipation, diabetes, and more. *Awardee has been approved a 2 month extension due to a delay in launching an online program that required the same resources. The new grant period end date is 8.30.2023.*

The RMPFIF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support the *MY25* Program training and portal access and grocery program.

**The Benedictine School for Exceptional Children Foundation Incorporated**

**Amount Awarded: \$87,750.00**

**Project Name: Benedictine Repairs and Renovations of Group Homes**

Project Summary: The Benedictine School for Exceptional Children Foundation, Inc. helps children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, multiple disabilities and autism achieve their greatest potential. Benedictine provides educational, vocational and job support programs that assist people in living and working as fully as possible in the community. The School provides residential services and include campus residential suites and 22 group homes on Maryland's Mid-shore. This project focused on 17 renovation and/or repair projects 9 group homes for adults and children in Talbot and Caroline counties.

The RMPFIF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the following renovations and repairs: a) replacement of siding and gutters; b) flooring replacement, c) asphalt parking area and driveway resurfacing, d) replacement of kitchen cabinets and countertops; e) relocate/replacement of appliances; f) replacement of doors, entrance pads, and sidewalks; g) window moulding; h) installation of water treatment system; i) asphalt and expand driveway and parking area.

**TidalHealth**

**Amount Awarded: \$187,775.00**

**Project Name: SWIFT**

Project Summary: TidalHealth and the Salisbury Fire Department expanded the Salisbury-Wicomico Integrated FirstCare Team (SWIFT) program to serve the communities of Wicomico County in addition to residents of the city of Salisbury. This evidence-based program has supported a multidisciplinary team including a nurse practitioner and paramedic who address health, medical and social needs of residents who are frequent utilizers of the EMS 911 and/or emergency department systems as well as respond to low-acuity 911 calls to prevent unnecessary ambulance transports and emergency department visits. The team has worked with the community health workers to assess and address needs such as transportation, food, housing, and access to primary care. The program has been shown to significantly reduce EMS calls and ED visits among enrolled participants. The funding has supported expansion of the program into county limits and provide the additional time needed to implement a long-term sustainability plan.

The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) the salary, wages, and fringe benefits for both full-time and part-time positions that include a paramedic, a registered nurse, a nurse practitioner, a community health worker, and a community health social worker; b) vehicle fuel and maintenance; and c) equipment for staff and patient care.

**Western Maryland Area Health Education Center (dba AHEC West)**

**Amount Awarded: \$13,000.00**

**ECHO - Exploring Careers in Health Occupations**

Project Summary: Western Maryland Area Health Education Center (dba AHEC West) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit whose mission is to improve access to and promote quality in healthcare through education and collaboration. ECHO - Exploring Careers in Health Occupations – is a health-careers “pipeline” program at AHEC West that seeks to address chronic regional health professional shortages by “growing their own” doctors, nurses, technicians, and other healthcare positions. ECHO recruits from high schools in the three western counties for its week-long summer program, which in the COVID era transitioned to online programming that introduces young people to various career fields and allows them to interact virtually with health professionals from hospitals, universities and other facilities. This project recruited 13 students to participate in the program, providing a day-long field trip to the University of Maryland at Baltimore and its schools of medicine, dentistry and other offices. The project provided financial incentive for these students to participate in ECHO through free college-admission preparatory classes and also promoted participation by minority students.

The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support a) transportation services; b) a chaperone; c) refreshments; d) salary, wages, and fringe benefits for the ECHO Program Coordinator and the Administrative Specialist to coordinate the trip; and, e) ACT and SAT prep courses through Allegany College of Maryland.

**Infrastructure – 7 Grant Award Projects - \$1,530,558**

**Allegany College of Maryland**

**Amount Awarded: \$250,000.00**

**Revitalizing a Community Asset: The Allegany College of Maryland Community Theatre**

Project Summary: Allegany College of Maryland serves Western Maryland and the surrounding region to deliver a diverse and relevant education centered around student success in a supportive and engaging community. This project allowed for the final revitalization of the theater space, which have never been completed since it was constructed in the 1970s.

The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the renovations of the theater that includes lighting, rigging, and AV.

**Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County**

**Amount Awarded: \$81,808.00**

**Broadband Ring and Extensions for Public Safety**

Project Summary: The Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County project will increase fiber capacity on the Oakland ring backbone, to serve key critical facilities, including Garrett Regional Medical Center, Garrett County Health Department, and the 911 Center. Additionally, distribution fiber will be built to and within facilities at two key public gathering places, the Mountain Fresh Pavilion and Broadford Park, both managed by the town of Oakland. *Awardee has been approved a 1 year extension in order to seek additional funding to complete the project. The new grant period end date is 6.30.2024.*

The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support a) conduit reel trailer and b) the installation of the Oakland Ring Fiber installation by Skyline Technologies.

**Calvert County Government / Economic Development**

**Amount Awarded: \$100,000.00**

**Armory Square**

Project Summary: Armory Square is a comprehensively planned retail and medical office project planned for the Prince Frederick Town Center. This project will relocate utility lines that currently bisect the property and make it unusable for any commercial purpose without the relocation of these lines. Relocation of the electric poles and lines will allow realignment of Armory Road which fronts the subject property and the county's old armory building. *Awardee has been approved a 6 month extension due to a permit issuance delay. The new grant period end date is 12.30.2023.*

The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support the subcontractors to relocate the existing underground Verizon structures, cable facilities, and the electric lines.

**Dorchester County Economic Development**

**Amount Awarded: \$380,000.00**

**Wood Road Repaving Project**

Project Summary: Dorchester County's economic development office is dedicated to strengthening the county's business and employment climate to create more prosperous, vibrant, and sustainable communities. The Woods Road Project consisted of improvements and upgrades (culvert replacement and drainage), repaving, and striping from the traffic circle on Route 16 to Route 50 (.08 Miles). Repaving the road allowed better accessibility for trucking materials and finished goods, attracting and retaining jobs, and improved safety for the businesses and emergency needs along this corridor. *Awardee has been approved a 3 month extension in order to complete the survey component of the project. The new grant period end date is 9.30.2023.*

The RMPiF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to cover road construction materials that include but may not be limited to ditch grading, piping, manholes, grates, patching, symbol, legends, and substrate.

**Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center**

**Amount Awarded: \$100,000.00**

**Chesapeake Farm to Freezer Project**

Project Summary: The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center and the Chesapeake Culinary Center has partnered to create the Chesapeake Farm to Freezer Project. This project established a processing and aggregation facility in Caroline County to process and flash freeze fruits and vegetables into 1 lb. & 2 lb. bags for wholesale & institutional buyers. This project 1) increased the availability of local nutritious food to those areas of the Eastern Shore having limited access, 2) created increased revenue & profit margins for local farmers & growers by providing wider access to markets (wholesale, institutional, & retail), and 3) created the opportunity for growers to scale & diversify their production & increased employment.

The RMPFIF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support build-out, equipment, and initial operational support.

**Enterprise Community Development, Inc.**

**Amount Awarded: \$500,000.00**

**Magnolia Gardens**

Project Summary: Magnolia Gardens is a proposed, 72-unit, new construction affordable housing (rental) community in La Plata, Maryland. The project will provide new, service-enriched affordable housing options to Southern Maryland families in an increasingly tight rental market, while creating two full-time jobs. The property will include one-, two-, and three-bedroom units spread across four separate residential buildings, including 24 units accessible to persons with disabilities. The separate community building includes a leasing office, club room with free wifi, fitness room, and business center with at least 8 laptops/tables available to residents. With a total budget of \$29 Million, the project is the first non-age-restricted 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit project constructed in La Plata. Magnolia Gardens will transform a vacant, underutilized parcel in La Plata into a vibrant affordable housing community. *Awardee has been approved a 2 month extension due to increased construction costs, the projects supportable mortgage decreased, and the delay in receiving the grant award. The new grant period end date is 9.30.2023.*

The RMPFIF grant award, along with matching funds, is being expended to support the General Contractor and Infrastructure costs (materials, labor, etc.) to build the entire project.

**Town of Boonsboro**

**Amount Awarded: \$118,750.00**

**Town of Boonsboro Sludge Dewatering Facility - Volute Press project**

Project Summary: Boonsboro is a town in Washington County, Maryland, located at the foot of South Mountain. The Town of Boonsboro Sludge Dewatering Facility - Volute Press project entailed the complete installation of sludge dewatering facilities including buildings, equipment, plumbing, and all related appurtenances. The project has improved the Town's critical wastewater treatment infrastructure and capabilities, by reducing operating expenses, improving sustainability using environmentally progressive technology and practices, and providing additional emergency storage capacity and operational flexibility.



The RMPF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to purchase equipment, materials, supplies, and subcontracts for the construction of the sludge dewatering facility. Equipment included a press, buildings, equipment, plumbing, and all related appurtenances.

### **Regional Councils – 5 Grant Award Projects - \$3,000,000**

#### **Upper Shore Regional Council**

##### **Amount Awarded: \$600,000**

The Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) is a cooperative regional planning and development agency serving Cecil, Queen Anne's, and Kent counties. In FY2023, the Upper Shore Regional Council completed the following projects:

Business Development, Retention, and Expansion: The USRC addressed the following business development, retention, and expansion projects in the Upper Shore Region:

- Aided 47 agricultural businesses through the Agriculture Microgrant program. \$96,000 in grant money leveraged an additional \$90,000 from the counties for \$186,000 going directly to small, agricultural businesses.
- Implemented Phase 4 Oyster Rotational Harvest Pilot program. Work entailed meeting with Kent County and Queen Anne's County commercial oyster committees, DNR, and other potential partners to discuss regional projects. Decided on the location for second planting of oyster spat, rotational model and leasing within a sanctuary. Implemented phase 4 planting in the Spring 2023.
- Through the Upper Shore Agricultural Equity Incentive Matching Fund, two agriculture businesses were granted \$15,000 each, leveraging \$1,300,000 in commercial lending and \$1,700,000 in borrower equity and creation of 15 jobs.

#### Addressed the Workforce Needs of the Upper Shore Region

- Met individually with all pertinent partners (school systems, economic development, workforce network, and chamber of commerce).
- Provide a forum to bring all parties together to discuss and explore a trade liaison and workforce training program.
- Increased marketing of program.
- Created a "working group" comprised of representatives from the private sector and public sector to advise the Technical Career Liaison.
- In the school calendar year 2022 - 2023, USRC provided \$10,000 to forty CTE students from Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's High Schools. Scholarships were given to welding, culinary, automotive and nursing students. This amount averages out to \$250 per student awarded to purchase any items necessary to complete their studies and work towards their certifications.
- Cecil County high school students from the Agricultural Sciences and Landscape and Horticultural Production programs visited nine agricultural destinations resulting in 157 student interactions.

#### Marketing

- Assisted with the Taste of Eastern Shore event during legislative session.
- Provided continual updates and improvements to the USRC website.
- Created additional marketing pieces for the USRC.

- Promoted partner activities through social media and USRC website.
- Created the 2nd Impact Report. Published in FY23.

### Regional Planning

- Updated USRC's DataStory.
- Updated Kent/QA DataStory
- Supported the GIS Circuit Rider program which assisted Cecil County with Foodie website, assisted Millington with web map applications, assisted Kent County with building height survey, assisted Town of Centreville with review of CAD and GIS data for website, and assisted Town of Queen Anne with review of CAD and GIS data for website.
- Assisted the Kent LMB with upgrading the website dedicated to transportation.
- Assisted the Kent LMB with radio and print advertising of transportation options in Kent County.
- Assisted Kent LMB with commissioning an implementation plan for transportation.
- Supported the creation of one app for ridership in Kent County and the region.
- Created the Community Development Technical grant program to assist municipalities in the region.

### **Mid-Shore Regional Council**

#### **Amount Awarded: \$600,000**

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

#### Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC):

- Tentatively attracted 2 agritech companies to Eastern Shore, awaiting establishment of Agbiotech manufacturing center
- Awarded \$500,000 from Talbot County to establish a pilot-scale AgBiotech manufacturing center. Efforts are underway to locate site. Limited real estate inventory is impeding efforts.
- Successfully transferred program from Easton Economic Development Corporation to ESEC
- Mentored 78 entrepreneurs during the period, provided a wide array of technical assistance and business services
- Registered 7 startups
- Executed 1 Business Model Canvas program
- Provided 4 one-on-one sessions to discuss Small Business Innovation Research program(SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer program(STTR)
- Assisted in executing Shore Hatchery event
- Participated as a judge in Gull Cage portion of competition
- Established relationship with regional Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFI) that is producing loans for Virginia producers, made 3 loans; unsuccessful with initial grant funding in the amount of \$1.5 million to establish fund targeted to Value-Added Producers.

#### Shore Gourmet/Chesapeake Culinary Center

- Developed 20,000+ ready meals that were sold with over 27 local producers utilized. Meals have been sold at the Shore Gourmet Market, through the Sho-Go Mobile Unit (in the tri county area)

and through the school system.

- Spirulina, baby ginger, herbs and other leafy greens are growing in the poultry house at VerLina in Ridgley, Maryland. Both retail and wholesale consumers purchase fresh and freeze- dried products.
- Caroline County Public Schools in partnership with the Chesapeake culinary Center/ Shore Gourmet have established a farm to freezer school system. This program is purchasing local produce from farmers in the summertime, it is processed and then frozen to be utilized to feed students during the school year.
- Worked with Tilghman Island Seafood (TIS) to provide Blue Catfish to Harry's Seafood for a seafood cake for schools which is awaiting USDA approval, a gourmet seafood cake for retailers and breaded fish to be sold to institutions and government agencies is being tested. Watermen are guaranteed \$0.60 per pound, which now provides a year-round source of income. TIS is at capacity and more equipment and storage is needed to support the process.
- Provided resources for developing a cottage industry for local entrepreneurs. Tours have been provided with tools to develop a product with the Maryland health department, insurance and county economic development agencies. There has been growing demand for utilizing the incubator kitchen for increases in food trucks and startup businesses. Chesapeake Agriculture Innovation Center (CAIC) gave a workshop at Chesapeake Culinary Center on starting up a business.
- Promoted the Caroline School House's Culinary Arts Center as a destination for tourism to provide a tour of the facility, catered with local foods, and an outlet to retail local products through Shore Gourmet Market and a mobile Farmers Meal and Market mobile unit to visitors and residents. Additionally, the mobile market has been working with Choptank Community Health to provide food prescriptions to children and utilize Farmers Market SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) vouchers.
- Successfully created processing for local niche produces that includes freeze dried spirulina and Savor Maryland gift boxes.
- Provided assistance or consultation on business development and planning; 28 potential users toured the facility to research the probability of developing a product.
- Successfully partnered with state agencies, nonprofits, and business on the marketing, harvesting and increased wholesale and retail sales of the invasive blue catfish.
- Continue to work in collaboration with Chesapeake Harvest and ESEC on the development and implementation of the Farm to Freezer project.

#### Delmarva Index

- Developed and completed the following items: State Parks Dashboard; Healthcare Facilities Map; Economic Snapshot infographics for Worcester and Caroline Counties; Workforce Infographics, Economic Snapshots, Mid-Shore CEDS, EDA Tools, and Mid-Shore Hires website.

#### GIS Circuit Rider

- Employed part-time GIS Circuit Rider that supported the Caroline County EMS mapping for calls that took place between 2015-2022; the Town of Denton for updating addresses point data and coordinated technical support for the town's permit integration software; completed mapping project for Cambridge waterfront project in Dorchester County; developed election district web

map application and an Easton Airport web map application, as well as maps for the Town of St. Michaels.

#### Mid-Shore Public Safety Dashboard

- Developed a Mid-Shore Public Safety Dashboard to visualize crime data in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties. Outreach was made to 12 law enforcement agencies, sharing link to tool.

#### Annie's Project

- Conducted a farm tour for 40 participants visiting 3 farms in the region
- Conducted two winter workshops on recordkeeping and Quickbooks for 44 participants
- Completed hybrid version of Annie's project for 27 registrants, 9 of which were FSA Borrowers

#### Summer Career Enrichment Program

- Enrolled 109 students for the program exposing them to careers in engineering, programming, aviation, and construction
- Designed 2 flyers to promote program, designed 3 presentations in Canva
- Held 3 Zoom information sessions with school system personnel from Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot County
- Designed 4 unique surveys in Cyber, App Development, Drone Technology, and Forensics
- Database was designed to track student's activities each day and report was generated to track students' performance
- Attendance for workshops was the following: 66% App Development, 75% Cyber, 75% Drones, and 90 % Forensics
- Program evaluations: students were tested at the end of each session and the results were the following Cyber 100%, Forensics 90%, App Dev - 75%, Drones - 85%

#### Regional Marketing

- Promoted government and business entities to a statewide audience by developing and sponsoring Tasted of the Eastern Shore event with Eastern Shore Regional Councils.

### **Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland**

**Amount Awarded - \$600,000**

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 RMPPIF award to implement the following eight collaborative projects:

Worcester STATT Internship Program (WSTAT-IP) - WSTAT-IP is a work-based learning experience that provided high school students and recent graduates from Worcester County an opportunity to explore Skilled 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. WSTAT-IP is co-sponsored by Worcester County and the TCCLESMD. In FY2023, WSTAT-IP served 115 individuals. They saw tremendous success in the STATT summer program, which resulted in 73 students, rising 8th-12 graders, participating

in the program. The Program consisted of the following elements: 3D printing, AgScience, Carpentry, Culinary Science, Digital Media, Drones & Robotics, Forensic Science, Laser cutting, and Welding. Out of these nine programs, students increased their content knowledge and skills growth by 100% in 6 of the programs. A family survey that was completed showed the parents were extremely satisfied with the program, scoring the program 4.76 out of 5.

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 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 camps that were set up for carpentry, horticulture/teacher academy, culinary, automotive, printmaking/drones, and welding. Thirty-one students participated in the SKILLS USA program to develop their leadership skills and program related knowledge and skills, while preparing to compete in local, regional, state and national competitions. The students also participated in the Drone and VEX Robotics programs which encouraged students to challenge their skills and knowledge while developing critical thinking skills. Two students participated in a regional competition hosted by SCTHS (other students automatically advanced). Twenty-one students attended and competed at the state level competition. Seven of the students medaled (1 Gold, 4 Silver, 2 Bronze). One student attended the National SkillsUSA competition in Atlanta, GA.

The Program runs a student internship program as well as a driver's education program. Three students participated in the internship program. All three students were very successful, and employees requested they continue their internship beyond 80 hours. Eighty students participated in the driver's education program, and all successfully completed the course. The local MVA offered two opportunities for students to take the drivers permit test.

Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) - A division of the TCCLESMD, LSWA is the Lower Shore Workforce Investment Board. The RMPIF funds were used by LSWA for its "Summer Youth Employment" program. The funds were leveraged directly against Maryland DoL funds received under the "Summer Youth Connection" program. Summer work experience is provided to students ages 16-21. Worcester County Public Schools, Wicomico County Board of Education, and Somerset County Public Schools provided the programs through a sub-grant from LSWA. These school systems were responsible for program delivery and outcomes through the sub-grantee contract. Beginning July 1, students were placed in a five-week worksite placement consistent with their interests where they gained on the job work experience. Job coaching/support was provided to each student while they were working. Students also participated in classroom work readiness activities such as career exploration, workplace etiquette, communication skills, job application and interview skills, etc. RMPIF grant funds were used to pay the students' wages, provide for school staff to oversee their progress and to purchase supplies and other necessary costs of running the program.

Somerset, Worcester, and Wicomico County school systems provided summer work experiences to a total of 68 students (RMPIF – Summer Youth Employment and MD SoL Summer Youth Connection combined); thirty-three of those students were enrolled in the RMPIF-funded Summer Youth

Employment program. A total of 48 hours of classroom instruction was provided by all three counties. Each of the 33 students received two services while participating in the program: Workplace readiness training in the classroom and a summer work-based learning experience. Thus, a total of 66 services were provided during the summer program. Wicomico County retained 4 IT positions after the official summer program ended. These positions were temporary, and the students continued to work through 9/15/22, approximately one month after the summer program concluded.

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. The program offered 6 classes in FY2023 across the State and resulted in 55 Veterans participating and in either a 30 hour or 60-hour class cohort, plus a business pitch competition and graduation ceremony.

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. Classes offered in FY2023 included woodworking, CNC machining, and homeschool art classes. 100 hours in maker education was completed for 32 paying members. 11 Youth Education events were and 60 Maker/DIY education events were held.

#### Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC)

- Developed GIS data layers to assist partners and a variety of GIS applications to view data. Data development includes regional LiDAR products for all lower shore counties, development impacts for the Wicomico County Board of Education, color and color infrared imagery services for Worcester County, storm water ditch data development for the City of Crisfield, and hosting of flood data services for Deal Island Peninsula Project
- Developed or updated existing applications including products for the Salisbury Zoo, Somerset County, City of Crisfield, Pocomoke City, and the City of Fruitland.
- Provided GIS technical support to the Town of Berlin, City of Salisbury, Worcester County, Wicomico County, and the Lower Shore Land Trust.
- Provided GIS Support for Somerset County SWOT -Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems
- Supported the Delmarva Index by developing two new products: the State Parks Dashboard and the Healthcare Cluster Application. Working towards the development of the Economic SnapShots and updates to several products: Eastern Shore Economic Resiliency Toolkit, Economic Snapshots, Workforce Infographics and the MidShore Hires website.

- Completed a housing quality and a storm water inlet data collection study for the Town of Berlin.
- Successfully developed a website design for the Phase 1 Lower Shore Online Comprehensive economic development Strategy (CEDS) project. The website consists of five main pages: Home, Region, Economy, Resiliency, and About, with multiple subpages within each of these. The team fully completed the following pages: Home, Economy, and Resilience though some work is needed on subpages which will be completed in Phase II of this project. The team researched and gathered data to be used in the Phase II Online CEDS access portal for Lower Shore Economic Development Offices creation. The CEDS is a necessary prerequisite to the Lower Shore retaining its federal designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) under the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the US Department of Commerce.

MAC, Incorporated - MAC Inc. is one of the five oldest Area Agencies on Aging in the United States. Founded in 1972 as a pilot project, and formally established by the Older Americans Act in 1973, MAC, as an AAA, is charged with helping older adults live with independence and dignity in their homes and communities. This project successfully Completed 147 hours of classroom instruction as well as 72 hours of on-the-job training working with MAC's Connections and Life Bridges program participants. Classroom hours, on the job training hours, evaluations, job placement and job retention data has been entered into Apricot. Additionally, held 1 Task Force convening to discuss the lack of trained care providers and ways to promote care giving training. Health Task Force members were surveyed to determine the viability of the task force and direction of the group. Membership is being reviewed to include agencies that can move forward and accomplish prior recommendations. Lastly, held the MAC's Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregivers Conference on April 26, 2023. There was a total of 263 conference participants, each receiving 6 hours of training; 82 of these participants were professionals seeking CEUs for their employment.

Somerset County Economic Development Commission - Services provided included the following: Access, via 21 Placer Venue Analytics Platform ("Placer's Platform"), to all major venues within the United States; Access, via Placer's Platform, to reports, including Visits, Trade Areas, Customer Journey, Customer Insights, Dwell Times, and Visitation by Hour/Day; Access to STI Demographics Bundle + Mosaic Data Set.

Lower Shore Regional Branding and Marketing – The program is executed and administered by the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore. RMPIF funds were used to produce in-house graphic design, layout and editing (pre-press) of full color multi- page regional glossy brochures, highway billboards, digital/print ad placement and other marketing materials, including branded/logo items, booth materials for conferences.

- Completed and made available the full color, 32-page LESMD Regional Economic Development Guide in both print and online. The guide is formatted as a magazine publication with content centered around showcasing Lower Eastern Shore regional economic assets. See [www.lesmd.net](http://www.lesmd.net) for access to digital flipbook version.

- Attended the following conferences: Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) 2022 Summer Conference (booth presence), 2022 J. Millard Tawes Crab & Clam Bake, 2023 Ocean City Spring Trade Expo (booth presence), and the 2023 Maryland Municipal League Summer Conference (booth presence) providing an opportunity to interact with hundreds of individuals, promote the LESMD region, distribute the updated Regional Economic Development Guide and field questions for the regional economic development offices. RMC logo displayed in booths at conferences.
- Continued updates to LESMD.net with the addition of a Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) projects page. The page lists details for each FY23 RMPIF funded project, including the recipient, award amount and a synopsis of the associated program.
- Serving as project manager for Shore Transit with creating a brand-new website set to include features to better connect rural residents on the Lower Eastern Shore to affordable transportation options. Created a 2D mockup of major pages, encompassing the look and feel of the new website.
- Assisted with planning, organizing and executing the Tri-County Council-sponsored 2023 Taste of the Eastern Shore legislative event in Annapolis, Maryland. With responsibilities including design & print coordination for all event artwork, sponsor support, website & social media maintenance, and event photography. The purpose is to highlight the rural regions of the Eastern Shore to state agencies and lawmakers located in central Maryland population centers.
- Continued collaboration with Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) to migrate the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) pdf document to an engaging website. Provided feedback, content, and artwork guidance to ensure the new website is user friendly and functional for planners and elected officials in this rural area of the state.
- Filmed, edited and produced a short form video for the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) Youth Committee and Wor-Wic Community College highlighting the Radiologic Technology career path. This is the first in its series. Each video will focus on growing regional career opportunities for area youth in this rural area of the state.
- Ongoing creative support for the Tri-County Council and its divisions (Lower Shore Workforce Alliance and Shore Transit) in the way of website updates and ongoing maintenance, brand design, photography, and photo editing, both pre and postproduction videography, written press releases, creative project management, and print design as needed. This assists in rendering more accessible those important services provided by the Tri-County Council and its divisions to the citizens, including at-risk populations, in this rural area of the state.

**Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland  
Amount Awarded - \$600,000**

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 RMPIF award to implement the following collaborative projects:



### Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission

- Southern Maryland Regional Agriculture Center was repurposed to make a new website for Southern Maryland meats. This is due to the groundbreaking timeline being pushed back due to county procurement policy, and the butcher is not needed at this time; however a new website is needed, due to a breach on the Southern Maryland Meats website that corrupted the original site, and due to the fact that a larger web presence/data capabilities are also needed to add the RAC portion to the website as well.
- Food Expansion Access Initiative was dissolved and funding was used towards Maryland Market Money program.

### Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium

- The United States Congress passed the Southern Maryland National Heritage Act as part of the Heritage Areas Act on December 22, 2022, designating Southern Maryland as the 56<sup>th</sup> National Heritage Area. President Biden signed this legislation into law on January 5, 2023. This authorizing legislation includes an initial appropriation of \$10 Million, at \$1 Million per annum.
- This national legislation was made possible by the support of the Rural Maryland Council through the funding for the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area Feasibility Study which was required by the National Park Service as a part of the authorizing legislation.
- The Southern Maryland National Heritage Area was launched on May 25, 2023, at the National Park Service site of Piscataway Park in Accokeek, Maryland, with well over a thousand people in attendance. Governor Wes Moore was the Keynote Speaker, with a ceremonial welcome and remarks from the Piscataway Conoy Tribal Chair Francis Gray and Chief Mark Tayac of the Piscataway Indian Nation, and additional remarks from Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller and Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Shannon Estenoz.
- National Heritage Area Branding: Hired national media team to support promotion with television, radio, and in-person events; focused on completing first stage of re-branding; solidified commitments from federal, state, county, and private partners. A new national website is in process.
- Submitted national RFP for consultants to guide Management Plan process and engaged consultant team.
- Regional Marketing and Promotion: Supported the newly created Piscataway Conoy Indigenous Peoples' Festival, with the goal to launch the festival within 2 years; solidified support for future cultural center; enhanced regional promotion and outreach; increased regional sponsorships to enhance capacity building and branding.
- Internship: Hired intern to attend major regional events and programming within Southern Maryland; supported and maintained social media activities; assisted Executive Director in promotional and outreach events.

### Workforce Programs

- Skillup® Southern Maryland: In FY23, 1,088 new users were trained, completing 5,483 training courses at a cost of under \$2.00 per user. The average score was 91%, beating the national average of 90%.

- 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional Hiring Event: 43 local businesses with open positions to fill met with 411 jobseekers. 99 interviews were held and there were 40 confirmed hires.
- Virtual Reality Career Exploration: Purchased 5 Virtual Reality Career Exploration (VRCE) headsets loaded with 40 career explorations. Engaged 50 young people in career explorations using VRCE with 50% career ready or prepared for further career development through occupational skills training, work-based learning, or apprenticeship.
- Youth and Young Adult Work Experience and Training: Engaged 92 young people, 14 in a six-week work experience with a local business and 78 in training with a 95% completion rate. 8 young people secured employment, and 3 entered occupational skills training.

### Transportation

- Wheels to Wellness Program: All three hospitals (Calvert Health, St. Mary's MedStar and University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center) have expressed a need to significantly increase the ridership of the program in each of the three counties; develop best practices that include evidence-based measures; scale up level of rides of 1,500 miles per month in the three counties to 3,000 to 5,000 miles per month; utilize CRISP (Connecting Research in Security to Practice) which partners with the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission to track data indicating positive health outcomes and lowered costs for patients.
- Vanpool Incentive Program: Supported the subsidy to start and maintain the (VIP) pilot program created in FY23 for up to 12 months with the goal of adding another 8 commuter van pools in FY25.

### Regional Planning

- Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee: Updated and sent the annual regional transportation needs inventory letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT); Hosted a Southern Maryland Pre Tour for the annual MDOT Secretary of Transportation's Consolidated Transportation Plan.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Advisory Committee: Provided ongoing technical and administrative support and attend quarterly meetings.
- Broadband Planning: Produced a map that shows unserved areas in TCCSMD region.

### Administration, Marketing, and Communications

- Public Relations & Outreach: Supported the contract services of Platinum Services to assist with functionality of website and assist with press releases, social media, and email communications.

### **Tri-County Council for Western Maryland**

#### **Amount Award - \$600,000**

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 utilized the RMPFI award to implement the following projects:

- **Summit Financing Solutions:** Expanded and improved Summit Financing Solutions by increasing the capital available for lending. Received 72 inquiries about their lending program; Received 5 applications; Conducted 7 presentation to lending institutions; Made 5 direct loans; Increased lending database by 106 members; and, distributed 21 e-newsletters.
- **Technical Assistance for Professional Services:** TCCWMD plans to continue to provide technical assistance for professional services to small businesses in their region. Approved 5 loans; lent \$775,890, leveraged \$1,045,726; provided technical assistance to 1 business; created 16 new jobs and retained 6.
- **Renovation and Maintenance of the New Headquarters:** Enhanced sustainability and eliminated rental payment by renovating new office building including: constructing a new roof, enhancing security, improving telecommunications and filling out furniture and equipment.
- **Marketing:** Produced publication for 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- **Administration:** 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.

**Connect With The Rural Maryland Council**

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