

RURAL MARYLAND COUNCIL

# ANNUAL REPORT

*Fiscal Year*

**2023**



**RMC**  
Rural Maryland Council

## Letter from the RMC Chair and Executive Director

As an independent state agency, the Rural Maryland Council must report each year to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly on its activities and grant expenditures. We are pleased to share with you the Rural Maryland Council's Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report. The State's Fiscal Year began on July 1, 2022 and ended on June 30, 2023. This report documents the grant expenditures as well as the activities of the Council during this time.

Thanks to the support of Governor Moore and the Maryland General Assembly, the Rural Maryland Council received level funding of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund in the amount of \$9,050,000 in the Fiscal Year 2023 State's Operating Budget along with the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund which received \$118,485. These programs are investing in our state's rural communities, creating economic opportunities and improving the quality of life. A full list of grant awards is included within this report.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Council awarded a total of 84 grants with a total of \$ 8,369,629 distributed. Under the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund, the Council distributed 5 grants to the Regional Councils in the amount of \$3,000,000; 17 Health Care grants in the amount of \$ 1,541,120; 8 Entrepreneurship grants in the amount of \$1,144,748; and 7 Infrastructure grants in the amount of \$1,530,558. The Council awarded \$1,153,203 to 47 grants under the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund.

The Council received \$750,000 for general operating expenses, the majority of which was spent on staff salaries (\$426,536.03).

### LOOKING AHEAD

#### **Convening the Rural Housing Committee.**

Under Committee Chair Dominic Butchko, the Committee will research and assess the availability of affordable housing in Rural Maryland utilizing the recent Maryland Housing Assessment; examine the availability of quality affordable rural housing and identify specific rural challenges; develop policies and strategies to incentivize the construction of affordable rural housing and identify best practices and case studies.

**Rural Summit** - Planned for Fall of 2023, the Summit convenes rural leaders and stakeholders to explore opportunities to foster economic growth and success in these unique communities. We will delve into the challenges faced by small rural communities and discuss strategies and initiatives that have proven effective promoting prosperity. By sharing best practices, success stories and innovative ideas, we hope to inspire and empower participants to take part in building a brighter future for their communities.

**Rural Maryland Foundation Update** - The RMC, in partnership with the Rural Maryland Foundation, will be looking to develop a rural Think Tank to come up with best possible solutions to address the issues facing rural Maryland. Part of this process will include more in depth research into the current issues facing rural Maryland and the best possible solution in addressing them.

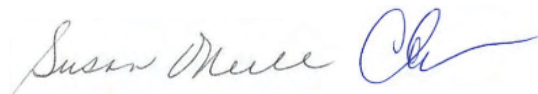
**Strategic Plan Update** - RMC's current strategic plan expires at the end of calendar year 2024. In order to have a new plan in place at the expiration of the old plan, RMC will hire a consultant to interview stakeholders and RMC members and begin formulating an updated plan.

### IN CLOSING

As a collaborative partnership, the RMC operates in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner. Policy-makers and managers from stakeholder agencies and organizations at all levels of government and the private sector are valued participants. Where practical, the decision-making undertaken by the RMC is made by reaching consensus.

Real change only happens when an organization makes a strategic decision to go directly to the source to discover the real issues and works with the people who really understand what's going on to solve problems. Consider being part of this important work and become an RMC member today by visiting our website [rural.maryland.gov](http://rural.maryland.gov). RMC meetings and events are open to anyone who is interested in improving rural communities.

Sincerely,



**SUSAN O'NEILL**  
RMC Board Chair

**CHARLOTTE DAVIS**  
RMC Executive Director

# Recognizing RMC Board Members *and* Staff

## OFFICERS

### Susan O'Neill

Chair, Executive Director of Upper Shore Regional Council

### Greg Padgham

First Vice-Chair, Executive Director of Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland

### Chris Benzing

RMC Second Vice-Chair, Executive Director of the Maryland Rural Development Corporation

## REPRESENTING MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

The Honorable **Mike McKay** – Delegate

The Honorable **Sheree Sample-Hughes** – Delegate

The Honorable **Brian Crosby** – Delegate

## REPRESENTING MARYLAND SENATE

The Honorable **George Edwards** – Senator

The Honorable **Katie Fry Hester** – Senator

## STAFF

**Charlotte Davis** – Executive Director

**Megan D'Arcy** – Program Administrator

**Molli Cole** – Program Coordinator

**Amanda Clevenger** – Administrative Assistant

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Mike Thielke

Joint Planning and Development Committee, Executive Director of Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center

### Lindsay Thompson

RMC Legislative Committee, Thompson Ag Consulting

### Matthew Tefteau

RMC Agriculture Committee, Government Affairs Manager of Choptank of Electric Cooperative

### Scott Warner

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Chair, Executive Director of Mid-Shore Regional Council

### Daniel Rider

Representing Rural Maryland Foundation, Maryland Forest Program Director of Maryland Department of Natural Resources

### John Hartline

Immediate Past Chair, Executive Director of Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

### Dr. Heidi Anderson

University of Maryland Eastern Shore, President of University of Maryland Eastern Shore

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

### Leslie Hart

Representing District 1 (Garrett, Allegany and Washington Counties), Washington County Economic Development

### Elizabeth Chung

Representing District 2 (Frederick, Carroll and Harford Counties), Asian American Center of Frederick

### Chris Kaselemis

Representing District 3 (Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties), St. Mary's County Office Department of Economic Development

### Dawson Hunter

Representing District 4 (Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties), Housing and Transportation Coordinator for Kent County Government

### Debbie Bowden

Representing District 5 (Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties), Caroline County Economic Development

### Matt Holloway

Representing District 6 (Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset Counties), Quantico Creek Sod Farm and Baywater Farm

### Renee Sheehy

Representing For Profit Organizations, Delmarva Power

### Bill Valentine

Representing State At-Large, Retired, Allegany County Commissioner

### Mollie Byron

Representing the Governor's Office, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

### Cassie Shirk

Representing Maryland Department of Agriculture, Assistant Secretary, Office of Marketing Animal Industries and Consumer Services

### Lori Ratzburg

Representing Maryland Department of Commerce, Senior Director

### Cindy Stone

Representing Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Director, Community Development Programs

### Sara Seitz

Representing Maryland Department of Health, Director, Office of Rural Health

### Jinhee Kim

Representing University of Maryland Extension, Professor and Assistant Director

### Leanne Mazer

Representing Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Executive Director

### Craig Hartsock

Representing Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council, President

### John Kinnaird

Representing the Maryland Municipal League, Mayor, Town of Thurmont

### Zack Tyndall

Representing the Maryland Municipal League, Mayor, Town of Berlin

### Jack Wilson

Representing the Maryland Association of Counties, Board of Commissioners, Queen Anne's County

### Keasha Haythe

Representing the Maryland Association of Counties, Council Member, Talbot County

### Elizabeth Hulett

Representing Maryland Association of Public Library Administration, Director, Western Maryland Regional Library

### Santo Grande

Representing Maryland Association of Community Action Agencies, Executive Director, Delmarva Community Services

### Ashton Shipley

Representing Maryland Farm Bureau

### Holly Porter

Representing Delmarva Chicken Association, Executive Director

### Beth Hill

Representing Maryland Forest Association, Executive Director

### Steve McHenry

Representing Special Appointment, Executive Director, Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO)

### Jerry McLaurin

Representing Special Appointment, President, People for Change

# History, Mission, Vision

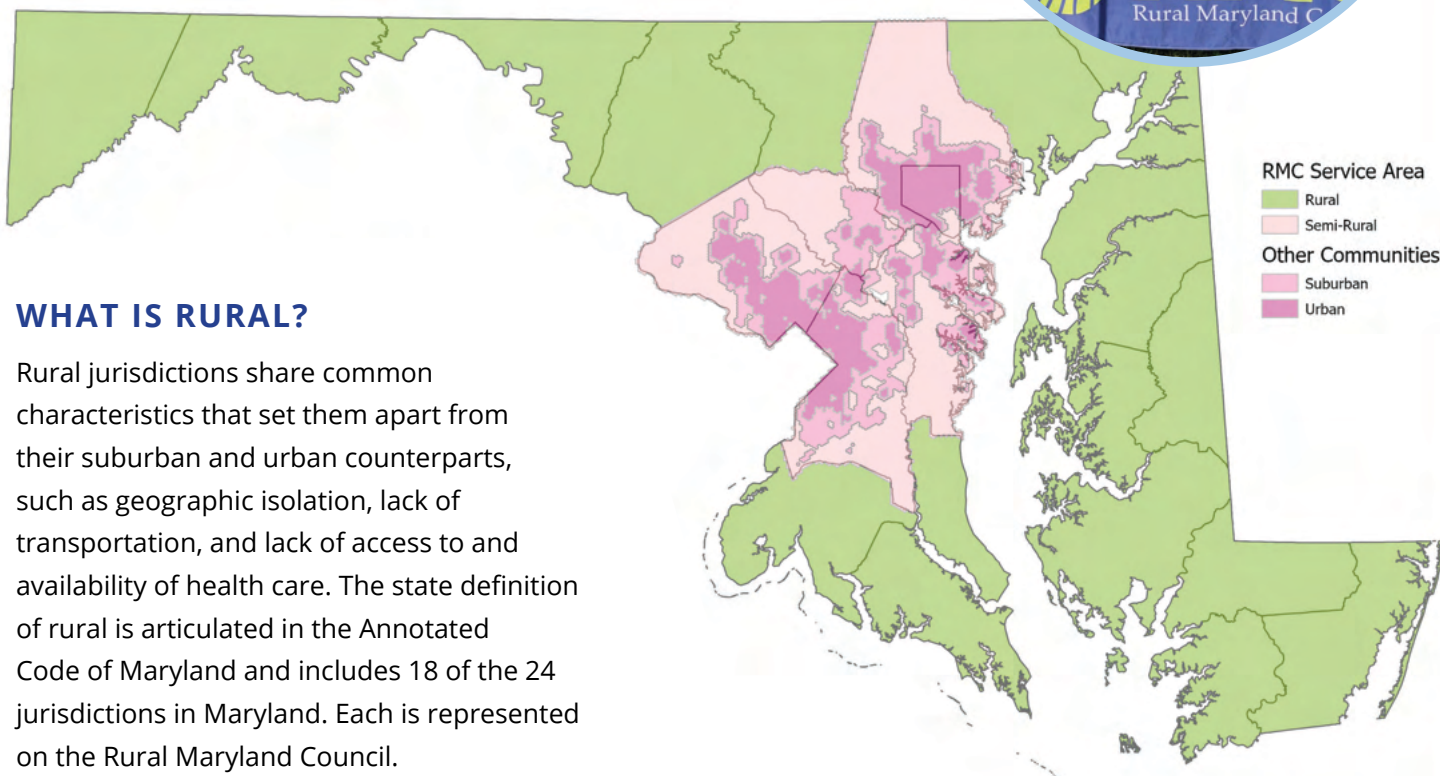
*In 1994, the Rural Maryland Council was established by the Governor as the Maryland Rural Development Council (Executive Order 01.01.1994.14) and then codified by statute in 1995 as the FORVUM for Rural Maryland. In July 2003 the FORVM restructured as the Rural Maryland Council.*

**OUR MISSION** is to bring together citizens, community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to collectively address the needs of rural Maryland. The RMC is an independent state agency located within the Maryland Department of Agriculture. We provide a venue for members of agriculture and natural resource-based industries, health care facilities, educational institutions, businesses, economic and community development organizations, nonprofit entities and government agencies to cross traditional boundaries, share information and address in a holistic way the special needs and opportunities in rural Maryland.

**OUR VISION** is a future where all of Rural Maryland is prosperous with thriving resources, vibrant economies and healthy connected communities.

## OUR GOALS

- Encourage healthy, connected communities throughout Rural Maryland through the convening of stakeholders, education, public relations and advocacy.
- Support the development and growth of vibrant economies in rural Maryland and foster stewardship of Maryland's natural resources
- Maximize RMC outreach, resources and mission through financial and organizational development



## WHAT IS RURAL?

Rural jurisdictions share common characteristics that set them apart from their suburban and urban counterparts, such as geographic isolation, lack of transportation, and lack of access to and availability of health care. The state definition of rural is articulated in the Annotated Code of Maryland and includes 18 of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland. Each is represented on the Rural Maryland Council.

# BRINGING MARYLAND'S RURAL COMMUNITIES INTO FOCUS

## Rural Maryland Outlook Online Tool

Rural Maryland Outlook is an interactive dashboard that is designed to showcase key demographics for each of the State's 18 designated rural communities as well as the six rural regions to communicate to policy and lawmakers on how rural regions in Maryland are doing individually both currently and overtime.



### ACCESS OUTLOOK ONLINE

Scan the QR code or visit our homepage to learn more at [rural.maryland.gov](http://rural.maryland.gov).



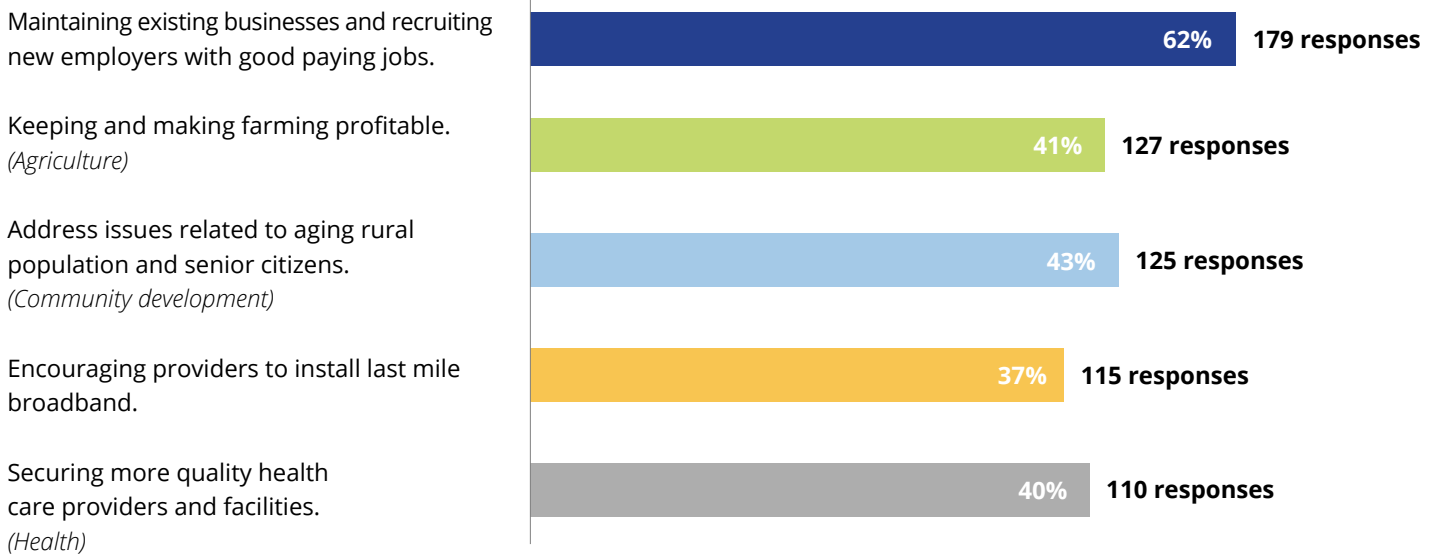
# Addressing Rural Issues

*Each year, the Rural Maryland Council surveys its membership to identify issues for further discussion, set legislative and funding priorities and to set strategic goals for the organization.*

The survey was distributed on-line with access for non-members through the Council's website, rural.maryland.gov, and at in-person events around the State. The Council asked five basic questions on issues impacting agriculture, infrastructure, economic development, community development and health. The Council also requested input on additional issues. Respondents had the option of offering additional comments.

The Council conducted the survey during the summer of 2022, distributing the survey in July with responses due in August. A total of 321 responses were received by the deadline.

## HIGHEST RESPONSES



## COMMENTS FROM THE 2022-2023 RURAL ISSUES SURVEY

*"Encourage local produce and farmer's markets. I also enjoy seeing how technology has been making farming more efficient. I believe Tech and AG go hand in hand."*

*"Preserve the landscape, waterways and the historic built environment in general. Impact of climate change on inland resources is a concern."*

*"I basically cannot start a business where I live, because my internet is unreliable."*

*"Rural economic development requires: Low-cost energy, access to quality water supply, access to market centers and rail facilities, adequate market facilities within reasonable distance."*

*"Engaging in regional cooperation in planning for new growth and development in rural areas. Securing more financial resources for roads, water and wastewater facilities and public transit. Responding to poverty and providing assistance to low-income families. Making health care more accessible and affordable."*

*"Aging in place in rural communities making homes safer and more accessible for residents, providing transportation for them as well as connectivity."*

*"Protect farmland from industrial solar facility development."*

*"Food security, manufacturing, workforce development and funding."*



## 2022 Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony

*On December 1, 2022, the Rural Maryland Council held their Annual Board Meeting and Rural Impact Awards dinner at the Kent Island Resort in Stevensville, Maryland. The meeting was held at the Farmstead Event Space and there were seventy-three participants.*

### LIST OF RURAL IMPACT AWARDEES:

**Rural Community Development Award** was awarded to The **Benedictine School** in recognition for their dedication and creativity to improve the quality of life for their community.

**Rural Volunteer Award** was awarded to **Selena Wilkes** for her leadership, dedication, and noteworthy volunteer achievement beyond the call of one's professional duties to help improve their community.

**Rural Economic Development Award** was awarded to the **Western Maryland Works** for their leadership, dedication, and noteworthy achievement to help improve economic development opportunities in rural communities.

**Rural Champion Award** was received by **Senator Michael Jackson** for his outstanding leadership and public service in advocating for policy solutions to greatly benefit rural communities. Senator Jackson was unable to attend the awards ceremony and was presented the award at the RMC quarterly board meeting held in January 27, 2023.

**Rural Leadership Award** was received by **Senator Addie Eckardt** for her going above and beyond in providing leadership to Maryland's rural communities.

*Featured Picture: Senator Eckardt accepting the Rural Leadership Award. From Left to Right Charlotte Davis, John Hartline, Senator Addie Eckardt, Scott Warner, and Kimberly Kratovil)*

**Rural Legacy Award** was given to **Governor Larry Hogan** and Secretary Joseph Bartenfelder accepted on the Governor's behalf since he was unable to attend. The Council recognized the Governor for his steadfast support over this term in support of rural Maryland. He is responsible for funding the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund in 2006 for \$2 million dollars and has increased this fund to \$9 million dollars in FY2023. The Governor understood and supported the importance of broadband pre-pandemic by issuing an executive order creating the Office of Rural Broadband and provided over \$500 million in funding for it through the Local Government Infrastructure fund. More recently, he invested in the rural Regional Councils under the rural economic development fund to boost economic development activity, stimulate private sector investment, and grow jobs in the state's rural regions. It is because of these actions and support of rural Maryland that he will have a lasting legacy in rural Maryland.

# 2023 Legislative Sessions

*The Maryland General Assembly adjourned Sine Die on April 10, 2023 after final passage of the Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget and bills concerning cannabis legalization and regulation, minimum wage, healthcare, and crime legislation.*

The Rural Maryland Council and their associated grant programs - the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund and the Maryland Agricultural Education Rural Development Assistance Fund, received level funding of \$9,046,194 in Fiscal Year 2024. We thank Governor Wes Moore, Senate President Bill Ferguson and House Speaker Adrienne Jones for their support.

## RMC BUDGET PRIORITIES ACHIEVED UNDER HOUSE BILLS 200 AND 202

- RMC received **\$9 million** for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund and RMC operations.
- The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund received **\$118,485**.
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program received a total of **\$94.9 million**.
- MARBIDCO received **\$8.3 million** for core programming; **\$1.5 million** for specialty loan programs, **\$1.4 million** for specialty grant programs, and **\$4.0 million** for the Next Gen Farmland Acquisition Program.
- Program Open Space received **\$75.9 million** for the State side and **\$89.2 million** for Local side.
- Rural Legacy Program was funded at **\$37.6 million**.
- The Department of Housing and Community Development received **\$96.3 million** for broadband assistance in the State.

The Council had an active session that resulted in monitoring **135 bills**, writing **60 position statements**, passing **3 bills**, held **4 events**, and hosted **7 Legislative Committee meetings**.

*The RMC celebrated the signing of three bills this session.*

The first bill was House Bill 695 - Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund – Allocation of Grants. This bill was sponsored by Speaker Pro Tem Sheree Sample-Hughes and promotes and expands the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund to include workforce and cooperative development projects and programs in rural Maryland through a formula-driven grant program administered by the Rural Maryland Council.

The second two bills passed were Senate Bill 511 and House Bill 596 – Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023. Senator Ellis and Delegate Ken Kerr were the two main bill sponsors. The passage of this bill allows for the Rural Maryland Council to help establish the Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Pilot Program for hospitals to coordinate transportation provided by a nonprofit organization to or from medical services for eligible individuals.

## LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

# 4

### EVENTS HELD

Welcome Breakfast, 1/13  
Legislative Lunch, 1/27  
Virtual Rural Maryland Day, 2/9  
Maryland Day Lunch, Bladen St, 3/24

# 7

### LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS

The Legislative Committee met this session to discuss bills, testimonies, and other legislative matters

# 60

### POSITION STATEMENTS

Position statements submitted to the legislators in support of bills

# 135

### BILLS MONITORED

Total bills monitored throughout the legislative session

# 3

### RMC BILLS PASSED

RMC introduced and successfully passed three bills this session - HB695 and SB511/HB596



These two bills are significant because routinely the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) receives requests to fund health-related transportation projects through the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund grant program. Examples of these requests include the purchase of vehicles to take patients to dialysis; support the development of computer dispatch software to aid in non-emergency medical transportation; and support salaries and wages of staff that intake and coordinate health transportation needs. The rise in demand for these requests led RMC to partner with the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland this past fall to lead three Transportation Health Care Roundtable meetings between healthcare and transportation providers to determine how non-emergency health transportation can be improved in the State.

The research and findings generated from these roundtables showed that there is a lack of coordination between the transportation and healthcare sectors, a lack of knowledge of where to go for transportation services, and a lack of resources. Additional findings from the roundtables show that there is a need to develop a rural transit model that provides on-demand services (versus fixed route), and smaller vehicles, and take a more regional approach to support the program. Through the Council's work and passage of Senate Bill 511 and House Bill 596, access to non-emergency medical transportation options will continue to improve across the State.



*Bill signing for Senate Bill 511 and House Bill 596 - Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023 at the State House on May 3, 2023.*

## LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH EVENTS

The Legislative Breakfast was held on **Friday, January 13, 2023**, at the Maryland Inn in downtown Annapolis, Maryland. The breakfast provided an opportunity for legislators to meet with RMC stakeholders from across the State to exchange ideas and information. 140 participants were in attendance.

Legislative Luncheon was held on on **January 27, 2023** at the Calvert House in downtown Annapolis, Maryland. Maryland Department of Agriculture Secretary designee Kevin Atticks and Maryland Department of Natural Resources designee Josh Kurtz were the guest speakers.

Rural Maryland Day was celebrated virtually this year on **February 9, 2023**. The event provided an opportunity for 105 rural advocates to meet with key 50 key legislators to discuss both the strengths and challenges experience living in rural Maryland.

The annual 'Grab & Go' lunch honoring Maryland Day was held on **Friday, March 24, 2023** on Bladen Street and over 200 people participated in the event. The event included local lunch catered by the Chesapeake Culinary Center and food samples from the following establishments: Oyster stuffing and crab dip from The Waterman's Wife; cookies from *Sweets & Treats by Sophia*; Blue Catfish fried cakes by the *Chesapeake Culinary Center*; and, cheese samples from *Palmrya Farm Cheese*.

# Quarterly Board Meetings

*The Rural Maryland Council is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. The Board meets four times a year.*

In September, the Council hosted their Fall Quarterly Board meeting on **Friday, September 23, 2022** at Harry Browne's Restaurant in downtown Annapolis, Maryland.

The event was sponsored by Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Horizon Farm Credit, The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, Upper Shore Regional Council, and the Tri County Council for Western Maryland. There were 75 registrants in attendance.

Under the Council's bylaws, the last meeting of the calendar year serves as the organization's Annual Meeting. In Fiscal Year 2023, the Annual Meeting and Rural Impact Awards was held on **Thursday, December 1, 2022** at the Kent Island Resort in Stevensville, Maryland. The meeting was held at the Farmstead Event Space and there were 73 participants.

The Winter Quarterly Executive Board meeting and Legislative Luncheon was held on **Friday, January 27, 2023** at the Calvert House in downtown Annapolis, Maryland. RMC Committee updates and events for the new year were shared. Maryland Department of Agriculture Secretary Designee Kevin Atticks and Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary Designee Josh Kurtz were the guest speakers. Senator Michael Jackson accepted his Rural Champion award for his outstanding leadership and public service in advocating for policy solutions to greatly benefit rural communities. There were 103 participants.

Spring Quarterly Executive Board meeting on **Friday, March 31, 2023**, was held at the Banneker Douglass Museum in downtown Annapolis, Maryland. Secretary of Commerce Kevin Anderson was the guest speaker. There were 55 registrants.

Maryland Department of Agriculture Secretary Designee Kevin Atticks speaking at the Winter Quarterly Executive Board meeting held on January 27, 2023.



# 2023 Regional Broadband Forum

The Rural Maryland Council and the USDA Rural Development partnered together to host the 2023 Regional Rural Broadband Forum on June 21, 2023 at the Crowne Plaza in Annapolis, Maryland. The purpose of the Forum was to address the next steps that the region needs to take to ensure universal broadband service to all households in Maryland. Session topics covered asset deployment to adoption and digital equity. Speaker Pro Tem Sheree Sample Hughes and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day were among many of the great speakers at the event. Joanne Hovis, President of CTC Technology and Energy gave the keynote address.



*Regional Rural Broadband Forum Panel on the Affordable Connectivity Program. From Left to Right - Senator Sarah Elfreth, Comptroller Brooke Lierman, Tami Watkins and Ronnie Hammond.*

## RMC SPONSORED EVENTS

### **Maryland Commodity Classic**

Jul 28, 2022 | Queen Anne's County, 4H Park, Centreville, MD

### **National Folk Festival**

Aug 26–28, 2022 | Salisbury, MD

### **Sunflower Festival**

Sep 3–4, 2022 | Serenity Farm, Benedict, MD

### **J. Millard Tawes Crab and Clam Bake**

Sep 28, 2023 | Crisfield, MD

### **JA Inspire Event**

Mar 14–16, 2023 | Wicomico Civic Center, Salisbury, MD

### **Delfest**

May 25–28, 2023 | Allegany County Fairgrounds, Cumberland, MD

### **Delmarva Chicken Association BBQ**

Jun 7, 2023 | Delaware State Fairgrounds, Harrington, DE

### **Drink Maryland Event**

Jun 17, 2023 | Centreville, MD

### **Lower Shore Land Trust Pollinator Garden Tour**

Jun 23–24, 2023 | Salisbury, MD

### **Buy Local Challenge Event**

Aug 1, 2023 | Serenity Farm, Benedict, MD

### **2023 Mountain Maryland PACE Event**

Jan 19–20, 2023 | Westin Annapolis Hotel, Annapolis, MD

### **Taste of the Eastern Shore**

Feb 9, 2023 | Graduate Annapolis Hotel, Annapolis, MD

### **Southern Maryland Dinner**

Mar 2, 2023 | Graduate Annapolis Hotel, Annapolis, MD

### **Maryland Rural Health Association Conference**

Oct 22–24, 2023, Ocean City Princess Royale Hotel, Ocean City, MD

### **Farm Bureau Conference**

Dec 2–5, 2023, Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Cambridge, MD

## Rural Maryland Foundation

Founded in 2001, the Foundation was created with a threefold purpose: to support the efforts of citizens and government to meet the economic and social needs of rural Maryland, to support the efforts of the Rural Maryland Council, and to serve as Maryland's Rural Development Council if the Rural Maryland Council should cease to function in that role.

The Foundation is a membership organization, open to individuals who are members of the Rural Maryland Council and to government agencies, and nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Over the years, the Foundation has been instrumental in developing and supporting the following projects:

- Transfer of Wealth Study
- Rural Maryland Philanthropic Development Strategy
- We Are Maryland and Aspire Maryland videos
- LEAD Maryland Foundation Fellowships

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Dan Rider**, *President*

**Kurt Fuchs**, *Vice President*

**Mike Thielke**, *Treasurer*

**Charlotte Davis**, *Secretary*

**Jennifer Walsh**

**Roseanna Vogt**

**Andrew Cassilly**

**Mel Litter**

**Rick Pollitt**

**Josh Hastings**

**Steve McHenry**

**Scott Warner**

**Susan O'Neill**

# Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund

## 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. 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 determination 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-Garre, Allegany, Washington)	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

Awardee	Total Award
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

Awardee	Total Award
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

Awardee	Total Award
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

Awardee	Total Award
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 Educaon Center	\$75,000
For All Seasons, Inc.	\$150,000
Fort Ritchie Community Center, Inc.	\$40,000
Garrett County Health Department	\$127,151
Habitat For Humanity of Wicomico County, Inc.	\$75,000
Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charies, Incorporated	\$10,000
Maryland Emergency Medicine Network	\$175,000
Partners for Care	\$45,000
The Arc Southern Maryland	\$18,750
The Benedicne School for Exceponal Children Foundation Incorporated	\$87,750
TidalHealth	\$187,775
Town of Millington	\$13,694
Western Maryland Area Health Educaon Center (dba AHEC West)	\$13,000

### RETURNED GRANT FUNDS

Organization	Project Name	Award Amount	Explanation
Town of Millington	Northern Kent County	\$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 RMPIF 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 RMPIF 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 RMPIF 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.

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## **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 grant period for this project is March 1, 2023 to February 29, 2024.*

The RMPPIF grant award, along with matching funds, is being 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.

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## **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 RMPPIF 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.

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## **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 RMPIF 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.

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### **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 RMPIF 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 to a delay in moving into the office space. The new grant period end date is 6.30.2024.*

The RMPIF 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.

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### **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.

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### **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 being 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 implemented 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 RMPPIF 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.

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### **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 RMPPIF 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 RMPPIF 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.

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### **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 RMPPIF 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 RMPPIF 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.

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## **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 RMPPIF 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.

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## **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 RMPPIF 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.

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## **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 RMPPIF 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.

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## **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.

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### **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.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the MY25 Program training and portal access and grocery program.

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### **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 RMPIF 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.

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### **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.

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

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

**Project Name:** *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.

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### **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.

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### **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.

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### **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.

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 will establish 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 will 1) increase the availability of local nutritious food to those areas of the Eastern Shore that have limited access, 2) create increased revenue & profit margins for local farmers & growers by providing wider access to markets (wholesale, institutional, & retail), and 3) create the opportunity for growers to scale & diversify their production & increased employment.

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

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## 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.

The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, has been 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 RMPIF 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 RMPIF 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 Taste of the Eastern Shore event with Eastern Shore Regional Councils.

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#### **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 RMPF award to implement the following eight collaborative projects:

**Worcester STATT Internship Program (WSTATT-IP)** - WSTATT-IP is a work-based learning experience that provided high school students and recent graduates from Worcester County an opportunity to explore 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. WSTATT-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 RMPPIF 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. RMPPIF 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 (RMPPIF – Summer Youth Employment and MD SoL Summer Youth Connection combined); thirty-three of those students were enrolled in the RMPPIF-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.
- 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.

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### **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 56th 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.

#### ***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%.
- 11th 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 RMPiF 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 50th 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.

## Maryland Agriculture Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund

### 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.

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

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
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
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**

**Project Name:** *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.

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## 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 Environmental 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.

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## 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.

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## 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 to 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.

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### **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 grant period for this project is March 1, 2023 to February 28, 2024.*

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

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### **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.

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### **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 been expended to support a) consultant services to complete the analysis and b) administration of the grant.

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## **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 suppression 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.

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### **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.

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### **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.

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### **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.

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### **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 to an 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.

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## **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 Chesterwyke 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.

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## **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 to a delay in receiving the 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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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 an promote amateur and professional equestrial 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.

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## 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.

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## **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-own 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.

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## **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-focuses 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.

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## **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.

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## **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 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 | \$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 and 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.

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### 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 to an 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.

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### **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.

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### **Garrett County Arts Council, Inc.**

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

**Project Name:** *\$MART 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 \$MART ART spaces, technology and programming, GCAC launched the \$MART 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.

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### **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.

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### **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 came 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.

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

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### **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.

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### **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.

# A COLLECTIVE VOICE FOR RURAL MARYLAND



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