



**RMC**  
Rural Maryland Council

# Fiscal Year 2025 Grant Information Session



Charlotte Davis  
Executive Director  
[rural.maryland.gov](http://rural.maryland.gov)



**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.

---

**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 convening of stakeholders, education, public relations and advocacy
- Support the development and growth of vibrant economies in Rural Maryland
- Foster stewardship of Maryland's natural resources
- Maximize RMC outreach, resources and mission through financial and organizational development



## Background

- In 1994, the Rural Maryland Council was initiated by the Governor as the Maryland Rural Development Council (Executive Order 01.01.1994.14) and codified by statute in 1995 (Economic Development Article, Sec. 13-401)
- Independent State Agency housed at the Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Operates under the direction of a 40-member Executive Board in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner
- The Council serves as the State's federally designated rural development council and functions as the voice of rural Maryland
- Funded under the State's Operating Budget

## Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

Council (Operating) funded at \$750,000

Grant programs funded at **\$8,260,479**

---



## ***Why We Work***

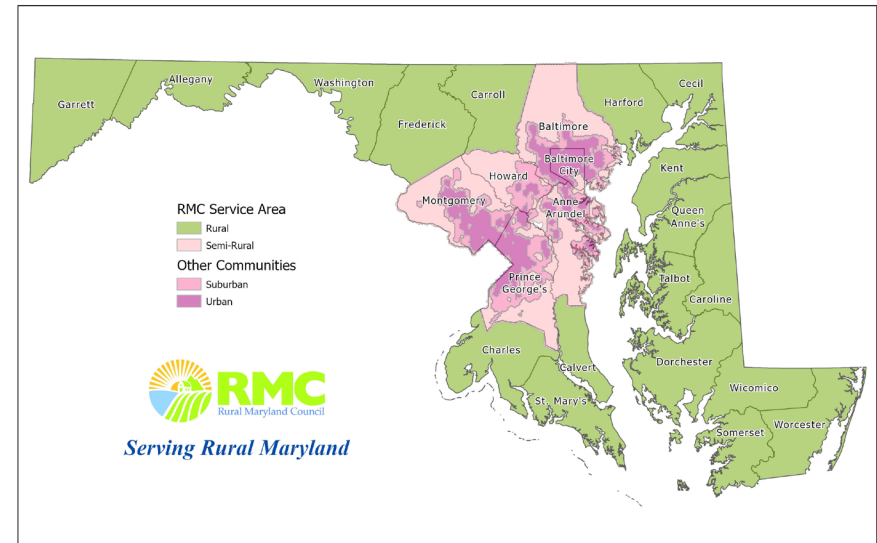
### **Challenges in Rural Maryland:**

- High unemployment rates
- High poverty rates
- Lack of access to transportation
- Education challenges
- Healthcare disparities
- Limited broadband and connectivity
- Infrastructure deficiency
- Pressure on the agricultural economy

## ***Where We Work***

### **Service Territory**

State statute designates the 18 counties as rural: Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester.







## ***How We Work***

### Education

- Neutral Convener-Issue Focused (Rural Summit, Roundtables, Forums)
- 

### Legislation

- Advocate & Educate-policy development, community engagement-connecting people to their government.
- 

### Grant Program Administration

- Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF)
- Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)

## **Legislative Highlights**

**4**

### **EVENTS HELD**

**Welcome Breakfast, 1/12**

**Legislative Lunch, 1/26**

**Virtual Rural Maryland Day, 2/8**

**Maryland Day Mocktails & Munchies, 3/25**

**10**

### **LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS**

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

**58**

### **POSITION STATEMENTS**

**Position statements submitted to the legislators in support of bills**

**215**

### **BILLS MONITORED**

**Total bills monitored throughout the legislative session**

# Grant Programs



# MAERDAF Grant Program: Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund



- Created in 2000 to provide financial assistance to rural-serving nonprofit organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development and agricultural and forestry education efforts.

---

- Between 2000 and 2024, MAERDAF awarded over \$13 million in grants to rural-serving nonprofit organizations.

---

- For Fiscal Year 2024, RMC received 98 MAERDAF applications requesting a total of \$3,374,140 in funding. A total of \$969,121 was awarded to 39 organizations.

---

- MAERDAF Priority Areas\*

Agriculture & Forestry	Energy	Rural Broadband	Youth Engagement & Leadership Development	Economic Development	Community Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Education</li> <li>• Regional Food System Development</li> <li>• Forest Industry Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Heat Power</li> <li>• Energy Efficiency</li> <li>• Biomass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Broadband Expansion Efforts, including municipal broadband</li> <li>• Digital Inclusion Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Technology Centers</li> <li>• Youth Enrichment Programs, including summer programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development</li> <li>• Education &amp; Workforce Development</li> <li>• Regional Marketing Efforts &amp; Tourism Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Transportation</li> <li>• Housing repairs</li> <li>• Housing counseling</li> <li>• Poverty Alleviation Efforts</li> </ul>

*\*The Grant Review Board will give full consideration to any eligible application regardless of the project focus area.*



# MAERDAF Grant Program

**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.

## Eligible Applicants:

- **501(c)3 Nonprofit Organizations**
- **Regional Councils**
- **Community Colleges**
- **Libraries**

- **Must serve 2 or more rural counties or statewide**
- **Timeframe:** Projects must be completed between August 1st– June 30th
- **Preferences:** Applicants who have secured matching funds (cash match preferred to in-kind). Federal funds are considered matching funds.
- **Project must be completed in 1 year**
- **Maximum Grant Amount:** \$45,000.
- **Fiscal Year 2025 Allotted Grant Funds:** \$878,964





# MAERDAF Grant Program – Expenditures



## Eligible Expenditures:

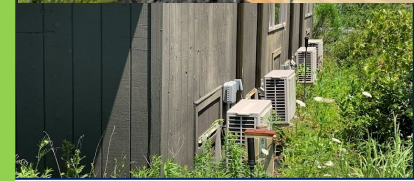
- MAERDAF does not generally fund ongoing staff positions due to sustainability. Grant funds may be used to fund staff time associated with the completion of the proposed project only.
  - Construction and renovation of buildings are eligible expenses. Acquisition of land is not. Please include quotes of expenditures and be shovel-ready.
  - The purchase or rental of vehicles are eligible expenses.
  - Meals are allowable if the costs are reasonable, and a justification is provided that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants.
  - Indirect administrative costs are capped at 10%
- 

## Ineligible Expenditures:

- MAERDAF does not generally fund staff salary or wages for employee positions.
- Contributions, donations or subsequent subawards to third parties are ineligible expenses. Gift cards are also ineligible.
- Organized fundraising including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts or bequests, or similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used are ineligible. Advocacy and lobbying activities are also ineligible.

# MAERDAF Grant Program

- **Around the Bay Farmer's Alliance, Food Security, \$45,000**
- **STEAM Onward, Inc., More Than Farming Project, \$13,450**
- **Chesapeake Culinary Center, Composting in Schools, \$10,000**
- **Evergreen Heritage Center, Appalachian Coal Camp Project, \$25,000**
- **Aaron's Place, Soup Kitchen Hood, \$44,803**
- **Vehicles for Change, Salisbury Location, \$45,000**
- **Habitat for Humanity, Choptank, Housing Counseling, \$950**
- **Rebuilding Together Kent County, Health Homes Initiative, \$30,000**
- **Asian American Center, Americorps – Building Capacity, \$25,500**
- **Lower Shore Land Trust, Birding Project, \$17,765**
- **Allegany College of Maryland, Robotic Welding Training Tool, \$45,000**
- **Building African American Minds, Youth Workforce Development, \$44,500**
- **Carroll Technology & Innovation Center, Cyber Education, \$15,000**
- **Junior Achievement of the Eastern Shore, JA Inspire, \$5,000**
- **Future Harvest, Pick-Your-Own-Consultant, \$33,000**



# Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) Grant Program

---

- Authorized by the Maryland General Assembly in 2006.
- Thanks to Governor Moore and the Presiding Officers of the General Assembly, the RMPIF grant program received \$9 million in FY2025.
- **Purpose** is to provide targeted investments to various regional, nonprofit, and educational entities to bring Rural Maryland's standards of living up to statewide averages.
- **Priority Areas:** Rural Regional Councils; Rural Entrepreneurship Development - Workforce Development, Cooperative Development, and Agricultural Development; Rural Infrastructure; and Rural Health
- For Fiscal Year 2024, RMC received 89 RMPIF applications requesting a total of \$14,389,524 in funding. A total of \$4,745,558 was awarded to 54 organizations.
- **FY2025 Allotted Grant Funds:** \$7,500,000

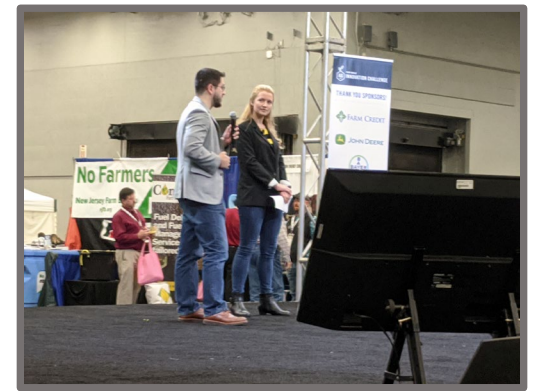


## RMPIF Focus Area

# **Rural Entrepreneurship- Agricultural, Workforce, Cooperative Development**

---

- **Eligible Projects:** Proposals should be regional (two or more counties) or intergovernmental (meaning two units of government).
- **Match Required:**
  - Must secure a minimum **25% cash match** funds from non-state sources.
  - Federal funds are considered matching cash funds.
- **Timeframe:** Projects must be completed between August 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30th
- **Grant Amounts:** No maximum grant amount; \$1,500,000 allotted funds, Grant Review Board will optimally fund 15 entrepreneurial projects.



### Eligible Applicants

**Local Government - Institute of Higher Education - Regional Councils - 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organizations - Community Colleges - Career Technology Centers – Libraries**



# RMPIF Focus Area: **Rural Entrepreneurship - Agricultural - Workforce - Cooperative Development**

---

- **Rural Entrepreneurship Development:** Promotes entrepreneurship and assists efforts that provide training and technical assistance to the entrepreneurs who can help build prosperous and sustainable rural communities by creating jobs, raising incomes, creating wealth, and improving quality of life.
  - ❑ **Rural Agricultural Development:** Supports programs and policies that will sustain and enhance agricultural production and agritourism.
  - ❑ **Rural Cooperative Development:** Supports programs that improve the economic conditions of rural areas by helping individuals and businesses start, expand, or improve rural cooperatives and other mutually-owned businesses.
  - ❑ **Rural Workforce Development:** Supports apprenticeships and community colleges so young adults can stay in their rural areas and become part of the rural workforce.

# RMPIF Focus Area - Infrastructure



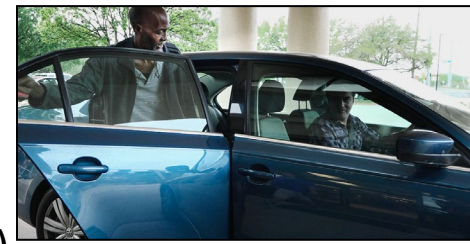
- **Eligible Projects:** Proposals must be intergovernmental (meaning two units of government)
- **Purpose:** To support **up to 25% of a total intergovernmental project** related to broadband, water, wastewater, transportation, workforce housing, and commercial/industrial facilities. *Workforce housing is defined as housing targeted to 80% to 120% of the median income of the community in which employees work.*
- **Timeframe:** Projects must be completed between August 1 – June 30
- **Match Required:**
  - **Must have secured at a minimum 75% matching funds from non-state sources.**
  - Federal funds are considered matching cash funds.
- **Grant Amounts:** No maximum grant amount; \$1,500,000 allotted funds, Grant Review Board will optimally fund 6 to 10 infrastructure projects.

## Eligible Applicants

**Local Government - Institute of Higher Education - Regional Councils - 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organizations - Community Colleges - Career Technology Centers - Libraries**

# RMPIF Guidelines - Rural Health

---



- **Eligible Projects:** Proposals should be regional (two or more counties) or intergovernmental (meaning two units of government)
- **When:** Projects must be completed between August 1st– June 30th
- **Match Required:**
  - Applicants must secure a minimum **50% cash match** in funds from non-state sources
  - Federal funds are considered matching cash funds
- **Grant Amounts:** No maximum grant amount; \$1,500,000 allotted funds for health care projects. Grant Review Board will optimally fund up to 10 to 15 rural health projects

## Focus Areas

- Improving access to health and medical - dental - behavioral health care
- Recruitment and retention of health care and public health professionals
- Behavioral and Mental health
- Chronic disease prevention and management
- Oral and Dental Health

## Eligible Applicants

**Local Government - Institute of Higher Education - Regional Councils - 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organizations – Federally Qualified Health Centers, Area Health Education Centers, Local Health Clinics – Other Rural Serving Health Organizations**

# RMPIF Focus Area – Rural Regional Planning and Development Councils

---

- **Eligible Applicants:** Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, Upper Shore Regional Council, Mid-Shore Regional Council, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore, and multicounty efforts serving rural communities in areas not served by the regional councils.
- **Purpose:** To provide grants specifically for projects and activities of the five regional planning and development councils.
- **Timeframe:** Projects must be completed between August 1st– June 30th
- **Grant Amounts:** Each regional council is eligible to receive up to \$600,000 for rural regional planning and development assistance, as well as applications received from multi-county efforts (Frederick, Carroll, Harford) in areas not served by an existing regional council.





# RMPIF Grant Program - Expenditures



## **Eligible Expenditures:**

- Salaries and Wages are allowable expenses. It is strongly encouraged to include a statement on sustainability for future years.
  - Construction and renovation of buildings are eligible expenses. Acquisition of land is not. Permitting costs are eligible expenses. Please include quotes of expenditures.
  - The purchase or rental of vehicles is an eligible expense. The purchase of equipment is an eligible expense.
  - Indirect administrative costs are capped at 10%.
- 

## **Ineligible Expenditures:**

- Contributions, donations, or subsequent sub-awards to third parties are ineligible expenses. Gift cards are also ineligible.
- Organized fundraising including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts or bequests, or similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used are ineligible. Advocacy and lobbying activities are also ineligible.
- RMPIF funds are not to supplant existing funding from other sources.

# RMPIF Grant Projects

- People For Change Coalition, Summer Enrichment Program - \$70,000
- Channel Marker, Inc., Psychiatric Crisis Bed - \$125,000
- Fair Hill Foundation, Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill - \$50,000
- Charles Regional Medical Center Foundation - Wheels to Wellness, \$26,000
- End Hunger Warehouse Food Distribution Program - \$250,000
- Sudlersville Volunteer Fire Company, Public Laundromat Facility - \$48,655
- Frederick Health Inc., Workforces Pipeline Initiative - \$332,185
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Summer Youth Enrichment - \$45,000
- Somerset County Health Department, Health Garden Project, \$55,000
- Garrett County Arts Council, Inc., Grantsville Smart Art Space, \$54,986
- For All Seasons, Inc., Community-Based Open Access - \$125,000
- Partners In Care, Ride Partners - \$75,000
- The Arc of Central Chesapeake - The Arc at Port Street - \$200,000
- City of Crisfield, Wastewater Infrastructure - \$110,000
- Maryland Deaf Community Center, Infrastructure - \$67,500
- Town of Middletown, Water Main Replaced & Lead Removal - \$150,000





# Grant Administration and Expectations



# Grant Decisions

---



- Grant award determinations for both programs are made by the independent MAERDAF Grant Review Board set by law and consisting of the Secretaries (or their designee) of:
  - Department of Agriculture
  - Department of Commerce
  - Department of Health
  - Department of Housing and Community Development
  - Department of Natural Resources
  - Rural Maryland Council Chair (or a designee)
- *Decisions by the MAERDAF Grant Review Board are final and binding*



# Ranking Criteria

---



- Basic Criteria: Applicant meets all basic eligibility requirements – it serves a regional (multi-county) or statewide rural constituency (or is a community college) and holds an appropriate IRS tax designation or is inter-governmental (meaning two units of government).
- Applicant has clearly identified a well-substantiated need and developed a **Scope of Work** that clearly describes specific project activities and how the grant will be used. Specific goals and measurable objectives were clearly stated and appear to be achievable.
- The proposal will significantly impact the quality of living in rural Maryland. The proposal demonstrates substantial value and lasting impact by providing information that includes relevant background research, opportunities for replication, and a statement of impact. (**RMPIF Only**)
- Goals are S.M.A.R.T - **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound.
- Mission Statement must be included and lend itself to the activities and goals addressed in the proposal.

# Ranking Criteria (Continued)

---

- The applicant has equal matching funds from non-state sources. If there are no matching funds, the applicant seems likely to leverage additional financial resources to match the grant. Priority is given to applicants with in-kind and funding matches.
- Other organizations, businesses, agencies, and/or other community-based entities have expressed strong support for the organization's work and planned grant activities. Letters of support and other supportive materials (newspaper articles, etc.) were included.
- Project/proposal falls under one or more of the following priorities:

## **MAERDAF**

- Agriculture & Forestry
- Energy
- Rural Broadband
- Youth Engagement & Leadership Development
- Economic Development
- Community Development

## **RMPIF**

- Infrastructure
- Entrepreneurship
  - Agricultural Development
  - Workforce Development
  - Cooperative Development
- Rural Health

# Eligible Entities

---

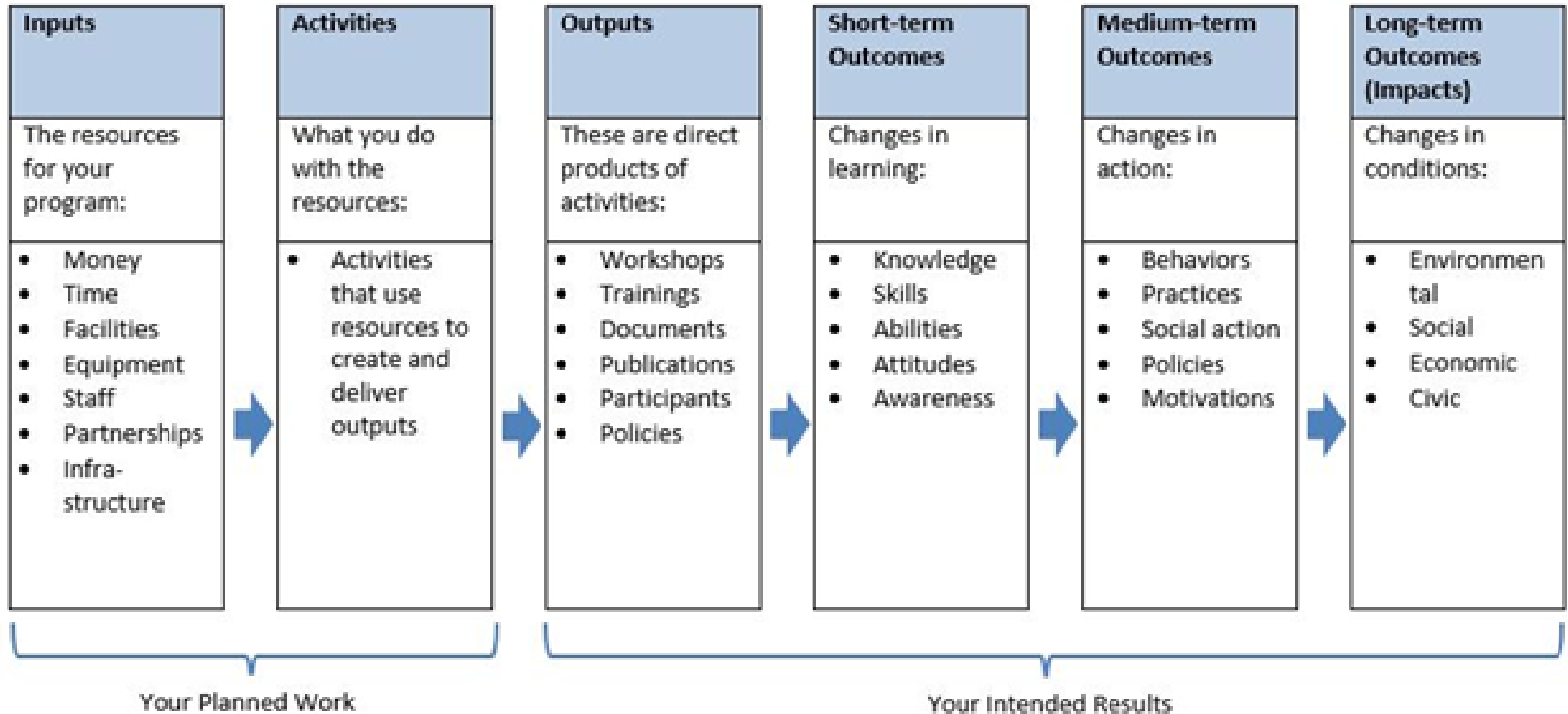
- Applicants must be in “Good Standing” with the State of Maryland. Go to <https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch> to find if your organization is in good standing with the State of Maryland.
- We do not require a copy of the certificate; it is sufficient to provide a screenshot and attach it with your application AS LONG AS IT SHOWS WHETHER THE ENTITY IS CURRENTLY IN GOOD STANDING.
- An explanation for an entity not in good standing must be included with the application otherwise, the application will be rejected.
- Include a recent Form 990 (where applicable)
- An official W-9 form furnished by the IRS will be required by all applicants to include the application.



# Outputs/Outcomes/Impact



## Program Logic Model Description







# Outputs/Outcomes/Impact

---

## Healthcare

- Patient engagement – number of services, outreach calls, intakes, assessments
- Transportation provided to #
- # new positions – how many people did they serve?
- Tech – new equipment purchased, number of people trained to use it, number of patients engaged with it
- Non-tech equipment – hoists, vehicles,
- # of investments in capacity – accreditation, electronic health records, telemedicine equipment
- Education – issues, number of people trained/train the trainers/total numbers educated
- Community Clinics – how many, in how many locations, # and type of services offered there, track hospital readmissions?



## Economic Development

- Number of new jobs created
  - Number of new businesses created
  - Number of new products created
  - Number of new incubators created
  - Innovation (F-3 Accelerator programs)
  - Supporting new industries (aquaculture)
  - Dollar amount of investments in capital and equipment
  - Entrepreneurship – introduce people to it, train people to do it - #s
  - Number and types of outreach and recruitment – job fairs, etc.
  - Number and amounts of loans made
  - Workforce training - # sessions, participants
  - Leadership development - #s participated
  - New engagement strategies that increase tourism (geocache trail)
-



## Education

- Number of education events, new courses created
  - Number of people trained
  - Investments in capital items such as vehicles to improve access and equipment such as museum equipment and buildings, tractor with front-end loader, off-road utility vehicle and trailer, multi-purpose building, wet lab, high tunnel, mobile career center, video equipment, job centers
  - Create new positions for volunteer coordinator, fellowship
  - Range of participants – adults, professions, youth, incarcerated people, ag education projects, veterans, non-native speakers, entrepreneurs, warehouse employees.
- 

## Infrastructure

- Pounds of nutrients reduced that enter regional waterways (connect to WIP and TMDL goals)
- # of households connected to the internet, and # of communities who have created system engineering and timeline to connect rural communities to broadband
- \$ Capital investment in public facilities (mental health centers, laundromats, WW treatment, mapping of utilities, museums)
- \$ Capital investment in transportation technology as well as vehicles for populations needing access and/or emergency vehicles

# Grantee Award Requirements

---



- Execute grant agreements
- Recordkeeping
  - Interim Report - Due January 31, 2025
  - Final Report - Due July 15, 2025
  - Evidence of Expenditures
  - Acknowledgement of Award and RMC
  - Site Visits
  - Share project photographs
- Managing For Results: RMC is required to submit outcomes to show the direct connection between the grants funded by RMC and the improvement in quality of life within rural communities.
  - Matching Funds Secured
  - # of Jobs Created or Retained
  - # of Loans Made
  - # of Individuals Trained, Served or Reached
  - # of Instructional Hours Delivered
  - # of Services Delivered
  - # of Research Tools Created
  - Amount of Funds Invested in Capital Items

# Changes, Extensions, and Unused Grant Funds

---

- Decisions by the Grant Review Board are *final and binding*.
- Minor changes permitted - the scope of work and project timeline may be modified and are dependent on review and approval by RMC staff.
- RMC Staff can approve up to 6-month extension. Extension requests past 6-months need to be approved by the Grant Review Board. Awardees with an extension that will overlay the following grant cycle, should not apply. It is recommended that you complete one project in its entirety before applying for another RMC grant.
- Unused grant funds must be returned to the Rural Maryland Council no later than July 15, 2024.







# Important Grant Dates

- Grant Process Opened: Monday, April 15, 2024
  - Phase 1: Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline: Friday, May 17, 2024
    - *Grantees will be notified the week of June 2, 2024, on the Phase 1 decision*
  - Phase 2: Full Application Due: Friday, July 12, 2024
  - Awards Announced the week of August 12, 2024 (date subject to change)
- 

## Awards

- Grant agreements are completed in September - November
- Grant award is forward funded
- 30 to 60-day turnaround for award check disbursement
- Award Checks mailed October - December

# Important Reminders

1. One Application
  - Named - FY2025 Grant Opportunities
  - Under Grant Opportunity Selection you will select MAERDAF or RMPIF
  - Please read the instructions provided
2. *Collaborator Tool* in Grant Portal:
  - This tool allows you to invite other users to work on the application with you. Both a video and written tutorial are available on the application for you to view.
3. W-9 Form Required: Name and address ***must match*** information submitted in the grant.



# Grant Tips



## Two-Phase Grant Process

Phase 1: Letter of Intent, a simple 500-word or less narrative due May 17, 2024

Phase 2: Full Application, 1500-word narrative, due July 12, 2024 (Invitation Only)

- Provide a clear and concise scope of work- i.e. what is the goal of my project and what do I hope to achieve
  - **Actions – Strategies – Outcomes – Timelines**
  - Write to someone who doesn't understand your industry nuanced language.
  - A good mix of supportive materials - start thinking about letters of support!
  - Write the Letter of Intent and full application narrative in Microsoft word-this program will count your characters and words for you and then copy/paste it into the grant portal.
  - Watch a recording of RMC's Grant Writing workshop at [rural.maryland.gov](https://rural.maryland.gov) on the Grant Opportunities page
  - More grant writing tips and resources can be found on the Governor's Grants Office website: <https://grants.maryland.gov/Pages/home-page.aspx>
-

# Phase I - Letter of Intent (It's not just a letter!)

---



## Information Requested

### 1. Organization Information

- Provide the organization's mission statement
- Is your organization a 501(c)3
- Has your organization received grant funding from RMC in the past 5 years?
- What is the legislative district of your organization (list of districts provided)

### 2. Project Information

- Project Name
- Project Point Contact Information
- Fiscal Point Contact Information
- Amount Requested
- Total Match
- Total Project Budget
- Project Start Date
- Project End Date
- Focus Area
- Project Narrative-Provide a clear & concise description of the proposed project.
- Project Goals & Anticipated Outcomes
- Partnerships
- Rural Geographic Area Served
- Region Served
- Population Served

# How to Apply

Click on this icon on the RMC website



- **Online Application Process**

<https://rural.maryland.gov/grant-opportunities/>

- To Start, you will need to ensure you have an account in the Grantee Portal. Please have the following information on hand to create your organization's account:
  - An email address that will act as your username
  - Your contact information
  - Your organization or fiscal sponsor's information, including the EIN/Tax ID number
  - Your organization's website URL
  - Your organization's Executive Officer's contact information
- Please retain a record of your login information as you will need it in the future to access your in-progress applications and your online application history. Applications can be accessed only via the account in which they were started.



50 Harry S. Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-5772  
[rural.maryland.gov](http://rural.maryland.gov)

# Thank You - Questions

## RMC Grant Contacts

### **Charlotte Davis**

Executive Director

Rural Maryland Council

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(410) 841-5774

[charlotte.davis@maryland.gov](mailto:charlotte.davis@maryland.gov)

### **Megan D'Arcy**

Program Administrator

Rural Maryland Council

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(410) 841-2744 (office)

(667) 458-9101 (mobile)

[megan.darcy@maryland.gov](mailto:megan.darcy@maryland.gov)