



Fiscal Year 2027 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Grant Guidelines and Criteria: Rural Regional Planning and Development Councils

Overview: The objective of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (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 cultural heritage and rural way of life. Resources provided to the Fund are designed to facilitate significant targeted investments in important economic and community development programs and promote regional and intergovernmental cooperation. These investments will 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. The Fund will serve the interests of the entire State by:

- Encouraging the increase of entrepreneurial activity and commerce and a balanced economy in the State;
- Relieving conditions of unemployment and underemployment in rural areas;
- Assisting in the retention of valuable farm and forest land for productive use by present and future generations;
- Promoting intergovernmental cooperation and public sector/private sector partnerships in and between rural and other areas;
- Enhancing the deployment of housing, transportation, water, wastewater, and broadband communications infrastructure and services in rural areas;
- Supporting rural commercial center redevelopment and community revitalization efforts; and,
- Generally promoting the health, happiness, safety, employment opportunity, and general welfare of the residents of each of the rural counties and municipal corporations of the State.

Regional Councils: The General Assembly has established five regional planning and development councils to concentrate on the needs of specific rural regions and ensure that those areas are not overlooked in public policy discussions. Each council serves a three-county area that is geographically, culturally and socio-economically similar. By working together and ignoring jurisdictional lines when need be, the rural regions have become stronger and more effective in finding solutions to the challenges before them.

The regional councils have brought elected, civic, and business leaders in their regions together to help create economic development strategies, preserve and assist agricultural and resource-based industries, obtain federal funding for infrastructure improvements, coordinate and sometimes even manage regional transportation projects (including public transit services), and develop support for a diverse set of public policy initiatives.

Rural regional planning and development assistance will provide grants specifically for projects and activities of the five rural regional planning and development councils and for other multi-county rural improvement efforts. The Councils have established strategic needs within the rural communities which will be reflected in the approved grant agreements.

Fiscal Year 2027: For Fiscal Year 2027, the State has budgeted \$1,925,000 in General Funds for the Rural Regional Planning and Development Council's portion of the RMPIF program. *Grant awards are contingent on funding availability.*

Guidelines and Criteria for FY2027 Regional Council RMPIF Grant Applications

Eligible Applicants: Tri-County Council of Western Maryland, Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland, Upper Shore Regional Council, Mid-Shore Regional Council, Tri-County Council of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, and multicounty efforts serving rural communities in areas not served by the regional councils.

Grant Amounts: GRANT AWARDS ARE SUBJECT TO FUNDING AVAILABILITY. Each regional council is eligible to receive [Insert Amount] in FY2027 for rural regional planning and development assistance. The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Grant Review Board will review any applications that may be received from a multicounty effort (Frederick, Carroll, and Harford Counties) in areas not served by an existing regional council.

Changes and Unused Funds: **Only** very minor changes in scope are allowed after a grant has been awarded. Some project timelines can also be modified. Unused grant funds must be returned to the Rural Maryland Council no later than July 15, 2027. The Grant Review Board may give consideration to assignments and reallocations of approved grants to additional partners.

Grant agreements: Awardees are required to execute a grant agreement. A sample blank grant agreement can be found on the RMC grant opportunities webpage - <https://rural.maryland.gov/grant-opportunities/>

Record keeping: Grantees are required to record expenditures and file an interim by January 15, 2027, and a final report by July 31, 2027, with the RMC. Reporting guidelines can be found on the RMC grant opportunities webpage - <https://rural.maryland.gov/grant-opportunities/>

Application Process:

- **Rolling Application Process from Monday, April 27, 2026, to Monday, August 3, 2026**
- **Access to the Regional Councils grant portal is available here:**
<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=ruralmaryland>
- **A special Access Code is required to access the Rural Regional Council application. Please contact RMC for the Access Code if applicable.**

Please contact the RMC Executive Director, Charlotte Davis at charlotte.davis@maryland.gov or (410) 841-5772 for any administrative guidance or questions.