



# Maryland Rural Health Transformation Program

## Now Open: FY2027 Grant Opportunity

### Transforming Rural Health Through Food Systems

#### About the Program

The Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) is a federal initiative designed to improve health outcomes in rural communities through system-wide change. Maryland received over \$168 million from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to implement this program.

**The Rural Maryland Council is investing \$4.6 million projects** that expand access to healthy, locally, grown food - improving health outcomes and strengthening rural economies across Maryland.

### Two Funding Opportunities

#### Opportunity #1

##### **Food Aggregation (Supply Side)**

Build systems that connect farmers to large-scale buyers

- Food hubs & aggregation centers
- Cold storage & transportation
- Processing & packing equipment
- Digital ordering/logistics platforms

#### Opportunity #2

##### **Purchasing Strategy (Demand Side)**

Help institutions buy more local, healthy food

- Procurement systems & policies
- Menu planning & kitchen upgrades
- Staff training & nutrition education
- Data tracking systems

#### **What We're Looking For**

Projects that:

- Increase access to healthy, local food
- Support small to mid-size farmers
- Improve community health outcomes
- Build sustainable, scalable systems

#### **Why This Matters**

This program is part of a statewide effort to:

- Improve rural health outcomes
- Strengthen local food systems
- Support Maryland farmers
- Build long-term community resilience

#### **Funding Snapshot**

##### **\$4.6M Available (FY2027)**

- No maximum award
- Projects: Aug 2026 – Sept 2027
- Match encouraged (not required)

#### **Key Grant Dates**

- Opens: April 20, 2026
- Deadline: May 15, 2026
- Awards: August 2026

Apply Now: [rural.maryland.gov](https://rural.maryland.gov)

## Who Should Apply

- **Public Sector:** Local governments, school systems, regional councils
- **Nonprofits:** Community-based organizations, food banks, food councils
- **Education:** Colleges, universities, and training institutions
- **Food System Partners:** Producers, cooperatives, and aggregators
- **Institutions:** Hospitals, childcare centers, and other large-scale food purchasers

## Geographic Eligibility

Projects must take place within Maryland's designated rural counties. Only applicants serving these areas are eligible: Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico and Worcester.

### Eligible Expenses

#### Infrastructure & Equipment

Aggregation, storage, and processing equipment

Examples: cold storage units, refrigeration, packing lines, wash stations

Vehicles and transportation systems

Examples: refrigerated trucks, delivery vans, mobile market vehicles

#### Operations & Staffing

Project staff salaries and wages

Examples: program managers, coordinators, drivers, food hub staff

Program delivery and coordination

Examples: logistics coordination, food safety compliance, outreach support

#### Systems & Planning

Technology platforms and data systems

Examples: online ordering systems, inventory tracking, procurement dashboards

Planning, training, and technical assistance

Examples: feasibility studies, food safety training, procurement training

#### Facility Improvements

Minor renovations (up to 20%)

Examples: upgrading packing areas, installing food-safe surfaces, small facility improvements

### Ineligible Expenses

#### Food & Direct Purchases

Purchase of food or produce

Examples: buying fruits, vegetables, or prepared meals

#### Property & Construction

Purchase of property or land

New building construction or major expansion

Examples: buying land, constructing new facilities, large-scale renovations

#### Financial Incentives & Fundraising

Gift cards or incentives

Fundraising activities or donations

Examples: raffles, sponsorship giveaways, fundraising campaigns

#### Existing Costs & Pre-Award Expenses

Replacing existing funding (supplanting)

Pre-award costs

Examples: ongoing operational expenses already budgeted, costs incurred before award date

#### Unallowable or Duplicate Costs

Duplicate payments or services covered elsewhere

Costs not directly tied to the approved project

Examples: billing for services reimbursable by insurance, unrelated expenses

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is a collaborative partnership that brings together public and private stakeholders to address the unique needs of rural communities. Through coordination, advocacy, and investment, RMC works to strengthen economies, support healthy communities, and steward Maryland's natural resources.

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