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Press Release

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Rural Maryland Council Announces Fiscal Year 2027 Grant Recipients

"The FY2027 grant awardees are turning vision into action and demonstrating the incredible impact that local organizations can have when they have the resources to meet the needs of their communities. The Rural Maryland Council is honored to support this year's recipients as they bring important projects to life and help shape a stronger, more resilient future for rural communities across Maryland." -Susan O'Neill, Board Chair

The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) supports the operating activities of the Rural Maryland Council, including the administration of the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) and funding for the State's five rural Regional Councils. The RMPIF competitive grant program makes strategic investments in key economic and community development initiatives while fostering regional and intergovernmental collaboration.

The MAERDAF grant program provides capacity-building support to rural-serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges. These grants strengthen efforts that advance statewide and regional planning, economic and community development, youth engagement and leadership development, energy, and agricultural and forestry education.

The Rural Maryland Council was allocated \$6,000,000 in the Fiscal Year 2027 state budget. As in previous years, grant decisions were particularly challenging given the strength and competitiveness of the applicant pool and the number of worthy requests received.

Fiscal Year 2027 Grant Awards

Total Requested	166 Applications	\$17,355,004
Total Awarded	64	\$5,468,485

Regional Councils: 5 Grants = \$1,925,000

Per Statute, one-third of the RMPIF fund is distributed to the State's five rural regional planning and development councils:

Awardee	Total Award
Mid-Shore Regional Council	\$385,000
Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore	\$385,000
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland	\$385,000
Tri-County Council for Western Maryland	\$385,000
Upper Shore Regional Council	\$385,000

Regional Council activities funded through RMPIF, include:

"A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland"

- Equity lending
- Transportation software and systems
- Regional agricultural development and education
- Economic and small business development activities
- Summer Career Enrichment
- Rural economic research

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund: 32 Grants = \$2,738,968

The RMPIF grant program has three focus areas: **Entrepreneurship, Infrastructure, and Rural Health**. The Entrepreneurship focus area includes Workforce Development, Cooperative Development, and Agricultural Development. In FY2027, the program received 70 applications totaling \$11,807,326 in funding requests. Of these, 32 grants totaling \$2,738,968 were awarded.

RMPIF Entrepreneurship (includes Workforce Development, Cooperative Development, and Agricultural Development): 11 Grants = \$941,512

Awardee	Total Award
Affiliated Sante Group	\$74,070
Asian American Center of Frederick	\$80,000
Ferry Cove Shellfish	\$110,000
Fort Ritchie Community Center, Inc.	\$50,000
Frostburg State University - Office of Regional Development & Engagement	\$125,563
Garrett College Foundation	\$55,000
Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna	\$140,000
Innovation Maryland	\$104,000
Talbot Watermen Association	\$110,000
University of Maryland, College Park	\$47,879
Vehicles for Change, Inc.	\$45,000

RMPIF Infrastructure: 5 Grants = \$804,430

Awardee	Total Award
Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County	\$275,000
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum	\$176,555
Chesapeake College	\$112,875
Garrett County Government	\$40,000
Maryland Rural Development Corporation	\$200,000

RMPIF Rural Health: 16 Grants = \$993,026

Awardee	Total Award
Allegany County Human Resources Dev Commission	\$30,000
Archway Station, Inc.	\$169,427
Bayside Community Network, Inc.	\$37,164
Caring Carroll Inc	\$34,000
Channel Marker, Inc	\$63,200
Chesapeake Housing Mission Inc.	\$42,866
For All Seasons, Inc.	\$100,000
Friends of Disabled Veterans in Carroll County	\$38,500
Garrett County Health Department	\$13,705
Habitat for Humanity Choptank, Inc.	\$50,000

HealthPort	\$45,000
Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Incorporated	\$5,000
The Jude House	\$70,000
University of Maryland School of Medicine	\$155,000
Westminster Rescue Mission	\$114,164
YMCA of the Chesapeake, Inc.	\$25,000

Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund: 27 Grants = \$804,517

The MAERDAF grant program has five focus areas: **Agricultural and Forestry Education, Community Development, Economic Development, Energy, and Youth Engagement and Leadership Development.** In FY2027, the program received 91 applications totaling \$3,622,678 in funding requests. Of these, 27 grants totaling \$804,517 were awarded. No awards were made in the Energy focus area for FY2027.

MAERDAF Agricultural and Forestry Education: 6 Grants = \$173,287

Awardee	Total Award
Appalachian Farm and Food Alliance, Inc	\$32,887
Baltimore County Land Trust Coalition	\$20,000
LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.	\$35,000
Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation	\$12,000
Maryland Forestry Foundation	\$38,400
MPT Foundation, Inc.	\$35,000

MAERDAF Community Development: 7 Grants = \$227,350

Awardee	Total Award
Day Care, Inc.	\$30,000
Freedom Hill Horse Rescue	\$10,000
Habitat for Humanity of Wicomico County, Inc.	\$45,000
Interfaith Housing Alliance	\$35,000
Preservation Maryland	\$21,850
Rebuilding Together Eastern Shore	\$40,500
Adkins Arboretum Ltd.	\$45,000

MAERDAF Economic Development: 8 Grants = \$265,880

Awardee	Total Award
Ann's Circle, Inc. (DBA Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center)	\$30,000
Beach to Bay Heritage Area	\$40,000
Easton Day Care Center, Inc dba Critchlow Adkins Children's Centers	\$45,000
Evergreen Heritage Center Foundation	\$39,500
Ocean City Development Corporation	\$45,000
Plumpton Park Zoo	\$45,000
The Arc Southern Maryland	\$15,700
Visit St. Mary's MD, Inc	\$5,680

MAERDAF Youth Engagement & Leadership Development: 6 Grants = \$138,000

Awardee	Total Award
Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maryland	\$30,000
Building African American Minds, Inc	\$45,000
Chesapeake Culinary Center	\$5,000
Community Mediation Upper Shore	\$30,000
Junior Achievement of the Eastern Shore	\$20,000

Rural Maryland Council: Operating Budget - \$697,464

Organization	Funds Utilized
Rural Maryland Council	\$697,464

Founded in 1994, the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) serves as the state’s federally designated rural development council and as a voice for Rural Maryland—advocating, educating, and helping rural communities and businesses across the state flourish and achieve greater equity with their suburban and urban counterparts.

The Council administers the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) and the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) grant programs. Additionally, RMC conducts research to better understand rural challenges, engages rural residents in developing solutions, and convenes stakeholders to identify solutions through consensus and coalition building.

RMC operates under the direction of a 40-member Executive Board in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner. The Council’s vision is a future in which all of Rural Maryland is prosperous, with thriving resources, vibrant economies, and healthy, connected communities.

The organization’s goals are to:

- Encourage healthy, connected communities throughout Rural Maryland through stakeholder convening, education, public relations, and advocacy;
- Support the development and growth of vibrant economies in Rural Maryland;
- Foster stewardship of Maryland’s natural resources; and
- Maximize outreach, resources, and mission through financial and organizational development.