



**MARBIDCO**  
growing rural ventures™

MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE-BASED  
INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
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For Immediate Release  
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### **New MARBIDCO “RELIEF Act” Grant Programs Are Now Open**

Annapolis (February 25, 2021)...The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) has announced that five new grant programs have been established to provide immediate pandemic adjustment and economic development assistance to agricultural and rural businesses in Maryland. These programs are funded with \$2 million that MARBIDCO will receive from the Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families Act, or “The RELIEF Act,” a bipartisan measure sponsored by Governor Larry Hogan and passed by the Maryland General Assembly.

With this newly available funding, MARBIDCO is offering the following grant programs: the Maryland Livestock Processing Equipment Relief Grant Program, the Maryland Shellfish Aquaculture Relief Grant, the Maryland Urban Farmer Relief Grant, the Maryland Local Food Cold Storage Relief Grant Program and the Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Investment Relief Fund.

“We are most appreciative of the support we received from the Hogan/Rutherford Administration and the Maryland General Assembly to enable MARBIDCO to offer these very responsive programs during this unusually challenging time” said Steve McHenry, MARBIDCO’s Executive Director.

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“These funds will be expeditiously distributed to help two very hard-hit rural industry sectors – forestry and oyster farming – as well as to provide targeted aid to livestock processors, urban farmers, and other agricultural producers and watermen needing cold storage equipment to better serve existing and new markets.”

A brief description of each of these programs is provided below:

- The **Maryland Livestock Processing Equipment Relief Grant Program** provides grants of up to \$100,000 (at up to 75% of the cost) to livestock processors to purchase meat processing equipment to help expand the capacity of their processing enterprises. The demand for local meat products overwhelmed local processors during the pandemic which led to scheduling backlogs at small processing facilities and farmers having to hold their livestock for longer periods of time. This program will potentially help to relieve some of this demand by providing funds to facilities to expand their processing capacity. First-round applications are due by April 1, 2021.
- The **Maryland Shellfish Aquaculture Relief Grant** provides grants of between \$500 and \$2,000 to persons holding State submerged land and/or water column aquaculture leases. The grants can assist shellfish aquaculture producers with their spring planting expenses, some of which are mandated under State law. There are approximately 175 oyster farms in Maryland, and many of these farms experienced large revenue losses in 2020 because of a dramatic decline in restaurant sales. First-round applications are due by March 15, 2021.
- The **Maryland Urban Farmer Relief Grant** provides grants of \$500 to urban farmers to assist with a portion of the costs associated with the urban commercial production of locally grown food products this spring. Urban farmers played a significant role in helping to feed city residents during the pandemic. First-round applications are due by March 15, 2021.

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- The **Maryland Local Food Cold Storage Relief Grant Program** provides grants of up to \$15,000 (up to 50% of the cost) to help agricultural and seafood businesses purchase the cold storage equipment that is needed to continue or expand operations. Farmers needing new cold storage equipment and facilities has increased significantly during the pandemic. First-round applications are due by April 1, 2021.
- The **Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Incentive Relief Fund** provides grants of 20% to 33% of a project's cost up to \$225,000, with the aim to help forest harvesters and wood fiber processors to purchase new equipment or construct facilities to increase the utilization and production of wood products in Maryland. The forest products industry has been devastated by the closure of mills and the loss of markets in recent years, and the pandemic has exacerbated this problem. There are more than 157,000 private forestland owners in Maryland (owning 10 or more acres of woodland). First-round applications are due by April 1, 2021.

Further information about these programs, including the application forms, may be obtained by visiting MARBIDCO's website at: [www.marbidco.org](http://www.marbidco.org). Interested persons can also contact the MARBIDCO office at: (410) 267-6807.

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*MARBIDCO was established by the Maryland General Assembly nearly fourteen years ago to help enhance the sustainability and profitability of the State's agricultural and resource-based industries in order to help bolster rural economies, support locally produced food and fiber products, and preserve working farm and forest land. MARBIDCO is a nimble, quasi-public financial intermediary organization which has a mission to serve exclusively the commercial farming, forestry, and seafood industries of Maryland. Young and beginning farmers are a special focus for MARBIDCO, as is farm operation diversification. In delivering its financing programs, MARBIDCO works cooperatively with commercial banks and Farm Credit Associations, as well as a host of federal, State, regional and local government agencies and universities. Since 2007, MARBIDCO has approved 754 financings totaling nearly \$67 million for food and fiber business projects located in of all Maryland's counties – and in the process has leveraged more than \$157 million in commercial lender financing. For more information about MARBIDCO's programs, please visit: [www.marbidco.org](http://www.marbidco.org).*