

## **Rural and Agricultural Business Grants, The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation**

\$2.0 Million (L00A12.20)

### **Purpose: Recovery Now Funding**

The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation shall provide grants to agricultural and rural businesses.

### **June 30 - Program Highlights and Plans to Allocate Remaining Balance:**

MARBIDCO was allocated \$2 million in RELIEF Act funding. Funds are being used to establish the following six grant programs to provide immediate pandemic adjustment and economic development assistance to agricultural and rural businesses in Maryland. Programs include:

- **Maryland Shellfish Aquaculture Relief Grants-** provides grants of up to \$2,000 to Maryland Shellfish Aquaculture leaseholders (oyster farmers) that hold one or more leases from DNR to help with spring production costs. Oyster farmers experienced very significant revenue losses during the pandemic and are required by law to maintain certain production on their leases.
  - MARBIDCO received 94 applications, of which 92 qualify for \$138,500.
  - Application deadline was May 15, 2021.
  
- **Maryland Urban Farmer Relief Grants-** provides grants of \$500 to urban farmers to help with spring production costs. Urban farmers must be located in urban areas and have had at least \$1,000 in annual agricultural product sales.
  - MARBIDCO received 19 applications requesting \$9,500.
  - MARBIDCO has approved 11 applications for \$5,500.
  - Application deadline was May 15, 2021.
  
- **Local Food Cold Storage Relief Grant Program-** provides up to a 50 percent matching grant up to \$15,000 to farmers and watermen to assist with costs related to the purchase and installation of cold storage equipment. Many farmers adjusting operations during the pandemic have needed cold storage facilities to better serve new or existing markets.
  - MARBIDCO received 100 applications requesting \$955,853 of grant funds.
  - MARBIDCO approved 78 applications totaling \$372,321. However, five have withdrawn their applications due to being approved for less grant funding than expected for their projects. Currently, MARBIDCO has 73 approved Cold storage grantees with grants totaling \$347,708.
  - MARBIDCO issued 78 grant agreements to successful applicants and has received 36 grant agreements back thus far. (Five have declined to accept the grant funds.)
  - The application deadline for Round 1 was April 1, 2021. There is no available funding for Round 2.

- **Maryland Livestock Processing Relief Grant Program-** provides up to a 75 percent matching grant up to \$100,000 for USDA-inspected meat processing facilities and \$70,000 for custom processing or mobile processing projects. Grant funds can be used to purchase livestock processing equipment and/or upgrade facilities to help expand production capacity in Maryland and help reduce the processing backlog that developed because of the pandemic.
  - MARBIDCO received 24 applications requesting \$1,255,554 of grant funds.
  - MARBIDCO approved 24 applications totaling \$615,958 of grant funds.
  - MARBIDCO has issued 24 grant agreements to successful applicants and received 22 grant agreements back thus far.
  - The application deadline for Round 1 was April 1, 2021. There is no available funding for Round 2.
  
- **Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Incentive Relief Fund-** provides grants of 20% to 33% of a project's cost (with 25% as a target) 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 program will provide much needed assistance to a struggling Maryland forestry industry that has been affected by recent mill closures and the loss of wood fiber markets.
  - MARBIDCO received 21 applications requesting \$1,894,594 of grant funds.
  - MARBIDCO approved 21 applications totaling \$749,951 of grant funds.
  - MARBIDCO has issued 21 grant agreements to successful applicants and received 16 grant agreements back thus far.
  - The application deadline for Round 1 was April 1, 2021. There is no available funding for Round 2.
  
- **Maryland Market Money Program** – provides grant funding to the Maryland Market Money Program that offers food insecure Marylanders using WIC, SNAP, FMNP benefits at farmers markets with matching dollars to purchase fresh food directly from local farmers. These grant funds will be used during the spring farmers' market season at various markets located around the State.

### **June 30 - Programmatic and/or Implementation Issues:**

Since the RELIEF Act passed, MARBIDCO has taken the following actions:

- Program information and application forms were developed and were available on MARBIDCO's website.
- MARBIDCO held or participated in various outreach and informational meetings to increase awareness.
- MARBIDCO provided informational material to our partners to help get the word out.
- MARBIDCO advertised the availability of these funds in the local agricultural media.
- Round 1 of the five grant programs has closed. The Cold Storage, Livestock Processing and Wood Products grant programs are oversubscribed and funding is not available for Round 2.

- MARBIDCO accepted applications for the Urban Farmer Relief Grant and Shellfish Aquaculture Relief Grant until May 15, 2021.
- Grant agreements for the approved Cold Storage, Livestock Processing and Wood Products grant program applicants were sent to applicants.
- Grant disbursement requests are being processed.

### **June 30 - Distribution of Funds:**

- The total of all MARBIDCO Relief Grant Program funds encumbered or distributed to date is: \$1,903,400 (of which \$1,101,472 has been disbursed and \$801,928 is encumbered).
- MARBIDCO has disbursed Maryland Shellfish Aquaculture Relief grant funds to 92 applicants totaling \$138,500.
- MARBIDCO has disbursed Maryland Urban Farmer Relief Grants to 11 applicants totaling \$5,500.
- The Maryland Market Money program has disbursed \$149,000 to Maryland Farmers Markets.
- MARBIDCO has disbursed \$255,924 in Livestock Processing Grant funds and encumbered \$273,066 in funds.
- MARBIDCO has disbursed \$369,260 in Wood Products Grant funds and encumbered \$370,170 in funds.
- MARBIDCO has disbursed \$183,288 in Cold Storage Relief Grant funds and encumbered \$158,692.