



Application Instructions for the FY 2008 Maryland Agricultural Education & Rural Development Assistance Fund

The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF), administered by the **RURAL MARYLAND COUNCIL**, provides financial support to rural-serving nonprofit organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education. In addition, MAERDAF assists community colleges that support small and agricultural businesses through enhanced training and technical assistance. The goal of this program is to increase the overall capacity of rural-serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges to meet a multitude of rural development challenges and to help them establish new public/private partnerships for leveraging non-state sources of funding.

MAERDAF Grant Timetables:

From 2001 to 2006, MAERDAF grants were calendar years grants. In order to better track and administer this program, we are moving to a fiscal year grant starting in FY 2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008). During this transitional year, the project period will cover a nine month period, rather than twelve.

- Grantees will be announced in early August 2007.
- Projects may begin in September 2007 but no later than October 1, 2007.
- The project period for this grant must be concluded by June 30, 2008.

Current MAERDAF Grantees who wish to apply for another grant **must** submit a detailed Status Report on their current project with their interim reports no later than **June 29, 2007**. See **Supplemental Instructions for Current Grantees, below**.

General Grant Guidelines

- Eligible applicants **must** hold an appropriate IRS tax designation [i.e., Section 501(c)(3) or similar].
 - Eligible applicants **must** serve a regional (i.e., multi-county) or statewide rural constituency. Projects requesting funding may serve non-rural counties, but must also serve more than one rural county.
 - Eligible applicants **must** clearly identify the need to be addressed and explain how MAERDAF funding would be used to meet that need.
 - **Priority will be given to applicants that have obtained equal matching funds from non-state sources.**
 - The maximum allowable grant is \$50,000; however, most grants are between \$5,000 and \$25,000. Grants are disbursed in two equal installments. Interim reporting requirements must be met before the final payment will be made.
 - Please do **not** submit handwritten applications. Download the application from our website (www.rural.state.md.us) and complete it using 12-point Times New Roman font (or something similar).
-

Instructions for Completing the MAERDAF Grant Application

Section 1: Basic Information

- **Amount of Funding Requested:** Specify the grant amount you are requesting from the MAERDAF program, not the cost of the entire project. The request should not exceed \$50,000.
- **Current MAERDAF grantee:** Check this box if you received a CY 2007 MAERDAF grant.
- **2007 Interim/Status Report was been submitted on or before June 29.** Check this box if you are a current grantee who is up-to-date on all reporting requirements. (Applicants who did not meet the reporting date will **not** be considered for continuation of funding.) A copy of the interim report is a required attachment of this grant application.
- **Name of Organization:** Provide the legal name of the organization applying for the funds.
- **Organization Type:** Check the box that best describes the primary function of your organization.
- **Mailing Address with City, State and ZIP:** Provide the mailing address where the organization would receive grant notification letters, grant agreements, grant payments, and other related documents.
- **Contact Person and Title:** Provide name and job title of the person who would serve as the organization's grant administrator and primary contact.
- **IRS tax designation:** Provide IRS tax designation. Grantee must be a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) IRS standing or comparable IRS tax status. A copy of the IRS designation letter is required.
- **Federal Tax ID Number:** Include this number. No payments can be made without it
- **Organization's Mission Statement:** Describe what your organization does, for whom and where. Your organization must serve more than one rural county.
- **Identify your customers:** Describe whom your organization serves.
- **Describe the extent of community involvement and cooperation with other organizations:** Provide information on how the organization involves the community. (i.e., Organization has a Board of Directors made up of community and/or business leaders.) Also describe efforts to coordinate the organization's activities with others in the community.

Section 2: Project Narrative

Include a concisely written narrative of no longer than five pages about the project for which you are seeking funding. Include and *clearly label* the required information below. Be as specific and detailed as necessary; however, be concise and to the point. There is no extra credit for unnecessarily long-winded descriptions. When completing the narrative, please use 12-point Times New Roman font (or something similar).

- **Scope of Work:** Clearly and specifically identify the need to be addressed and how your overall project will address this need. If MAERDAF funds will be used for a portion of the overall project, highlight and emphasize the portion of your project that will be completed with MAERDAF funds and why this funding is important. This scope of work should also include a statement on the number of individuals, businesses, and/or communities that will be served by your project and the number of partnerships that will be formed or solidified.
- **Goals and Objectives:** Describe what will be achieved as a result of this grant and how success will be measured. Include a table which shows a goal on one side (i.e, improve

survival skills of young people) and a measurable objective on the other (i.e., three thousand eight-year-olds will attend “Cooking with Tree Bark” classes. Eighty percent of them will learn to make cheesecake out of bark.)

- **Matching Funds:** Use the form provided to list all the matching funds your organization has (or will have) available for this project and identify the sources, such as federal, county/municipal, educational institution, nonprofit/philanthropic, corporate/private business, other. Priority is given to applications that have an equal amount of matching funds from non-state sources available. Include any plans your organization has to solicit additional resources for your project.

Section 3: Appendix Attachments

- **Attachment A: Projected operating budget.** Use the form provided to describe project expenditures, including any leveraged funds in accordance with the budget outline provided.
- **Attachment B: Specific project line item budget.** Provide itemized project-related costs specified in this grant application, aligning costs to the scope of work.
- **Attachment C: Pertinent supportive materials.** Attach letters of support from relevant stakeholders, newspaper articles about the project, etc. Letters may be sent to us under separate cover. If possible, provide a list of the letters you expect to follow.
- **Attachment D: A copy of your IRS Determination Letter.** You must verify that you are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or similar body.
- **Attachment E: Status Report to Date.** Current grantees only must submit a detailed Status Report with their required Interim Report by June 29. A copy must be included with this grant application. See: Supplemental Instructions for Current Grantees (below)

Signature and Date: All applications must be signed and dated by a representative of the organization who is authorized to do so. This does not have to be the contact person listed in the application. Applicants may be considered ineligible without this signature.

How to Submit Your Application Packages

- **A complete MAERDAF Application includes:**
 - Cover Letter
 - MAERDAF Application Form
 - Project Narrative
 - Appendix Attachments, A-D (Attachment E is required of current grantees only).
- **Submit EIGHT (8) copies of a complete application.** (One original should be included among the eight) Email applications, in whole or in part, are *not* acceptable.
- **DO NOT PLACE YOUR APPLICATION IN ANY KIND OF NOTEBOOK, BINDER, FOLDER, PLASTIC SLEEVE, PRESENTATION PORTFOLIO, etc.** Simply clip items together with a paper or binder clip ONLY.
- **Mail all eight copies in one package to:** The Rural Maryland Council, Attn: MAERDAF, 50 Harry S Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401.
- **Due date:** All applications **must be received** in the RMC Office by 5 p.m. on **July 6, 2007**. Applications received after the due date may not be considered. FedEx, UPS and other overnight or courier deliveries are acceptable, as long as they arrive on the due date.

If you have any questions after reviewing these instructions, please call or email Vanessa Orlando at: orlandva@mda.state.md.us or 410-841-5774.

Thank you for applying.



Supplemental Instructions for Current Grantees

Current MAERDAF grantees who wish to apply for continued funding must submit a detailed Status Report with their required Interim Report **by June 29, 2007**. This report must be submitted to BOTH the grant administrator and to the Rural Maryland Council. (If the RMC is administering your grant, only one copy is needed.)

A copy must be included with this grant application.

The Status Report and Interim Report can be one in the same, but **must** include:

- The amount of funds spent to date;
- A detailed status report on the expected short-term and long-term deliverables;
- Whether the project is on schedule, and if not, why not;
- Whether the project is on or over budget, and an explanation for any significant variances;
- A specific explanation of any significant changes to the goals and objectives stated in the original application; and
- A statement indicating that the deliverables expected in the grant agreement will be met by the end of the project period.

Current grantees who are applying for a 2007-08 MAERDAF grant for a new project or program do **not** have to submit a Status Report.

Note: Current grantees who do not report on time *and* who do not include a copy of their interim/status report with this application will be deemed ineligible.