

VIDEO RELEASE: Governor Hogan Announces New \$50 Million Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund

Grants of Up To \$10 Million For Each Rural Regional Council Will Be Made Available To Address Key Issues Like Infrastructure, Broadband, and Workforce

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Larry Hogan today announced that \$50 million in grant funds will be made available to boost economic development activity, stimulate private sector investment, and grow jobs in the state’s rural regions. Five rural regional councils, representing the Upper, Mid and Lower Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland, and Western Maryland, will submit proposals to the Maryland Department of Commerce outlining how they plan to use up to \$10 million available through the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund.

“Today we are taking the next important step forward in our efforts to help rural Maryland come back better and stronger than ever before,” said Governor Hogan. “This unprecedented \$50 million investment will help us put even more ‘open for business’ signs in the windows in our small towns, it will create thousands of new jobs in rural communities, and it will literally transform neighborhoods and communities for the better all across our state.”



[\(Watch\)](#)

Counties that will benefit from the grant funds include Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester. Regional projects that foster collaboration between the counties are encouraged.

The grant program is designed to be flexible and allow each rural council to determine the best use of funds within the program's guidelines in coordination with the counties they represent. Eligible uses of the funds include developing infrastructure such as utilities, transportation, and broadband to support the attraction, retention, or expansion of businesses, as well as infrastructure related to specific industry sector development including manufacturing, cyber security, and the life sciences.

Additionally, the funding can be used for workforce development and attraction of talent, as well as projects that stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation. Planning and feasibility studies are also eligible, as well as certain capital and operational expenses. The funds may not be used for any direct incentives to the private sector.

"Through our regional representatives, Maryland Commerce works very closely with our rural regional councils to give them the one-on-one support and resources needed to spur job growth and investment in all regions of the state," said Maryland Commerce Secretary Mike Gill. "We recognize that every county, especially our rural counties, has unique challenges and these additional funds will help them to better compete for economic development projects and look for opportunities to collaborate regionally."

Today's announcement marks the latest economic recovery initiative launched by the Hogan administration. In June, Governor Hogan [announced](#) Project Restore, which provides financial incentives for small businesses and commercial developers to revitalize vacant retail and commercial space. This year the governor introduced [legislation](#) to codify Project Restore. In August, the governor [launched](#) Connect Maryland, a \$400 million investment to ensure universal broadband across the state.

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