



## **Upper Shore Regional Council Receives \$10 Million Rural Maryland Economic Fund Grant**

**Chestertown, MD (December 15, 2022)** - The State of Maryland awarded Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) a \$10,000,000.00 Rural Maryland Economic Fund Grant to stimulate economic activity, private sector investment and grow job opportunities in the region. One of the five rural Maryland regional councils named as grant recipients, Upper Shore Regional Council will use the funds to advance critical economic initiatives in Kent, Cecil and Queen Anne's Counties and throughout the Upper Shore Region. In all, \$50,000,000.00 in economic assistance was awarded to Maryland's Upper, Mid and Lower Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland and Western Maryland by the Maryland Department of Commerce. Program guidelines allow each rural council to determine the best use of funds in alignment with the counties they represent.

"The economic and infrastructure challenges faced by rural communities are many, and this funding will help our citizens compete and prosper in a meaningful way," said Susan O'Neill, Executive Director of USRC.

With collaboration determining the funding priorities on the Upper Shore, USRC will further a broad range of projects within Kent, Cecil and Queen Anne's Counties and in the region at large. In Cecil County, \$2,900,000.00 will support road improvements, workforce development and American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility enhancements. "We thank the Upper Shore Regional Council and the State of Maryland for their support of rural economic development initiatives. This investment allows us to further our plans to provide unparalleled access to quality jobs in Cecil County," said William Sorenson, Economic Development Director for Cecil County.

In Kent County, \$2,900,000.00 will be allocated to infrastructure and business development projects. "Quality infrastructure and economic opportunity go hand in hand," observed Jamie Williams, CECD, Economic and Tourism Development Director for Kent County. "Businesses of every size need adequate infrastructure to locate and/or expand. These projects are an investment in our citizens and our communities."

Queen Anne's County will use the \$2,900,000.00 to enhance broadband access, infrastructure, workforce development, entrepreneurship, agriculture and aquaculture projects. "This transformational funding will allow the County to implement programming focused on access to better jobs, technology and innovation opportunities in some of our most rural areas," stated Heather Tinelli, Economic and Tourism Development Director for Queen Anne's County.

USRC will dedicate the remaining \$1,300,000.00 to workforce development, career technical education, classroom technology improvements and business attraction projects.

“Local governments have the best feel for what their communities and jurisdictions need. The USRC and its three counties understand where funds are essential, and we thank Governor Hogan for placing trust in our leadership,” said Chris Corchiarino, Chair of the USRC Executive Board.

**About the Upper Shore Regional Council**

Since 2003, the Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) has fostered planning and development in Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne’s counties. USRC affords federal, state, county and local governments a regional forum to identify issues and opportunities. USRC plans and implements programs to improve the quality of life in the Upper Shore Region of Maryland.

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