

## **Applications Open: RURAL READINESS PROGRAM COHORT 2026**

The Rural Readiness Program is seeking applicants for its 2026 cohort. This initiative supports community-based leaders and organizations working to advance place-based economic development and build local capacity across rural Maryland.

### **Program Goals**

- ✓ Promote economic diversification and growth in rural communities
- ✓ Strengthen community organizations and leadership capacity
- ✓ Support innovative, community-driven projects
- ✓ Foster partnerships among local stakeholders, businesses, and government agencies

### **Who Should Apply?**

Individuals who live or work in one of Maryland's designated rural areas and represent:

Community-based nonprofit organizations

Local government entities

Tribal groups

Other community organizations serving rural Maryland

### **What We're Looking For**

Projects and programs that directly support:

Place-based economic development

Community capacity building

Leadership development

Organizational strengthening

Sustainable rural community growth

Preference will be given to applicants demonstrating collaboration with local businesses, educational institutions, and community partners.

## **Application Requirements**

Submit a Letter of Interest and Resume.

Your Letter of Interest should include:

Project or Program Narrative

Community Impact Statement

Capacity Building Plan

Supporting Documentation (letters of support, endorsements, community data, etc.)

## **Selection Criteria**

Applications will be evaluated based on:

Project relevance and clarity

Long-term community impact

Feasibility and sustainability

Strength of partnerships

Innovation and alignment with rural development priorities

## **Program Timeline**



Application Deadline: August 1, 2026



Cohort Training: 6–8 sessions between September and December 2026



Project Completion Period: Fiscal Year 2028 (July 2027–June 2028)

## **Apply Today**

Letter of Interest and Resume must be emailed to [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov).

To learn more about the Rural Readiness program, visit our [website](#) or contact us directly at 410-841-5772 or [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov).