



MARBIDCO

MARBIDCO MATTERS

Winter issue Vol. VII

Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation's (MARBIDCO) quarterly newsletter offers Ag/RBI economic development news you can use. Discover our financing opportunities, programmatic updates, news, upcoming events, and more.

Happy New Year!



WHAT'S NEW @ MARBIDCO

MARBIDCO WPIEI Grant Recipient Awarded \$125,000 for Facility Expansion

MARBIDCO has awarded a **\$125,000 FY 2026 Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Incentive Grant (WPIEI)** to Cambium Carbon, PBC, located in Baltimore County. The grant supports high-impact projects that advance value-added wood production and job creation within Maryland's forestry sector.



The WPIEI program helps strengthen Maryland's forestry businesses by improving operational efficiency, increasing productivity, and expanding employment opportunities. For FY 2026, MARBIDCO received three applications, with Cambium Carbon selected following a competitive review process. Cambium Carbon plans to use the funding to support a major operational expansion, including outfitting a newly leased 118,000-

square-foot facility in Columbia that will consolidate milling, drying, fabrication, and inventory under one roof. The project includes investments in advanced milling, kiln-drying, and fabrication equipment, enabling expanded production of kiln-dried and thermally modified wood products. "We are eager to leverage additional MARBIDCO funding to support this next phase of operational expansion and critical equipment investments... while driving responsible resource use and creating good-paying jobs in Maryland," said Marisa Repka, co-founder and COO of Cambium Carbon. The expansion is expected to double production capacity and significantly grow the company's workforce over the next three years.

MARBIDCO's Maryland Livestock Processing Equipment Grants Awarded to Processors



MARBIDCO received eight applications for the Maryland Livestock Processing Equipment Grant Program, with \$227,617 requested during the Fall 2025 grant cycle.

The Maryland Livestock Processing Equipment Grant Program supports expanding livestock processing in Maryland by providing grants for equipment purchases and facility upgrades, focusing on large-animal and blue catfish processing.

Applicants included two USDA-inspected slaughter or blue catfish facilities, one other USDA-inspected facility, and five custom-exempt processors. Five applications were complete and approved, while three were incomplete and awaiting submission of final documentation.

Grant funds and matching applicant funds must be used to purchase processing equipment for USDA-inspected, custom-exempt, or mobile facilities.

MARBIDCO will be matching up to 50% of project costs, with grants capped at \$50,000 for USDA-inspected slaughter facilities and \$20,000 for other eligible facilities or projects. The five approved applicants will purchase essential equipment, such as packaging equipment, a walk-in cooler, a temperature-controlled van, a refrigeration condenser, and other business-related equipment.

USDA Value-Added Producer Grant and MARBIDCO Maryland Value-Added Producer Matching Grant Opened January 15, 2026



The USDA Value-Added Producer Grant Program is a highly competitive nationwide federal grant program that helps agricultural producers develop and market value-added activities. Eligibility for the grant requires applicants to provide a 100% non-federal match to the USDA grant that is provided. To help producers meet the non-federal financial matching commitment, MARBIDCO is currently offering the Maryland Value-Added Producer Matching Grant (MVAPMG) to provide up to 15% of the matching funds required. More specifically, MARBIDCO offers up to

\$7,500 for Planning Grants and up to \$25,000 for Working Capital Grants.

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps U.S. agricultural producers enter into value-added activities that:

- Generate new products from raw agricultural commodities
- Create and expand marketing opportunities
- Increase producer income through enhanced product value and market reach

Eligible applicants include: an agricultural producer, agricultural producer group, farmer or rancher cooperative, or majority-controlled producer-based business venture (all defined terms under federal regulations).

Grant funds can be used for

- Planning up to \$50,000: Planning grant funds can be used to pay a Qualified Consultant to conduct and develop a feasibility study, business plan, or marketing plan associated with the value-added agricultural product.
- Working capital expenses, up to \$200,000: Working Capital grant funds can be used to pay eligible operational costs related to the value-added agricultural product.

USDA Application Deadline: The USDA **Value-Added Producer Grants** application deadline is April 15, 2026. To view the VAPG Grant Application Portal User Guide, click [here](#). Electronic applications will be accepted via the **VAPG application portal** until 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 15, 2026. Additional information is available on [Grants.gov](#) or by contacting the state's **USDA Rural Development** office.

MARBIDCO 2026 Deadline: Applicants seeking to receive MARBIDCO matching funds for the USDA VAPG must apply to MARBIDCO at least two weeks before the federal deadline.

The MARBIDCO electronic application deadline is 4:00 p.m. on April 1, 2026.

Applications received in the mail with a March 27, 2026, postmark will also be accepted.

Applicants must attach a completed copy of their federal application form as part of the application submission, including all required attachments.

Send Completed Applications to: MARBIDCO Programs, 1410 Forest Drive, Suite 21, Annapolis, MD 21403. Or send electronically to brawlings@marbidco.org

NOTE: The maximum cumulative amount of grant funding a single applicant may receive from all MARBIDCO grant incentive programs is \$50,000.

MARBIDCO Value-Added Producer Matching Grant (USDA Option)

USDA Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG)



MARBIDCO Team Members Making an Impact!

We're excited to share some great news about MARBIDCO staff members who are actively contributing to Maryland's agricultural community.



Sierra Criste, MARBIDCO Financial Programs Specialist.



Brian Cadden, MARBIDCO Financial Programs Officer.



Steve McHenry, Executive Director of MARBIDCO was a member of the first LEAD Maryland class.

Celebrating Sierra Criste's Dedication

Financial Programs Specialist Sierra Criste is wrapping up two years as part of the LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program, Class XIII. This prestigious program helps emerging leaders strengthen their leadership skills, broaden their networks, and make meaningful contributions to agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities.

This February, Sierra and her LEAD classmates travel to Portugal as part of an international study tour to explore the country's agricultural and rural landscape — an incredible opportunity to learn and share ideas globally!

Sierra's dedication doesn't stop there. She is also:

- A Farm Credit University Commercial Agriculture Program graduate
- Treasurer of the Southern FFA Alumni (Anne Arundel County)
- Secretary of the Anne Arundel County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Committee.
- A recent graduate of the Farm Credit Ag/Biz Planner program.

Welcoming Brian Cadden to LEAD Maryland

We're also proud to announce that Financial Programs Officer Brian Cadden has been accepted into LEAD Maryland Class XIV!

He'll participate in the program through 2027, gaining firsthand experience with Maryland's diverse agricultural industries while also learning critical leadership skills. Brian is also a Farm Credit University graduate, where he completed training in leadership development, financial literacy, customer service, loan origination, and agricultural lending practices.

MARBIDCO's LEAD Maryland Legacy

Sierra and Brian join a strong tradition of MARBIDCO involvement in the LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program. Our other LEAD Maryland alumni include:

- Steve McHenry, Executive Director, Class I (who formerly served as LEAD Board Member/Officer for 16 years)
- Stacy Kubofcik, Assistant Director, Class XII (who is currently a Member of the Board of Directors)
- Allison Roe, Financial Programs Officer/Program Coordinator, Class XI

We're proud of our team's continued commitment to promoting leadership and excellence in Maryland agriculture, forestry, seafood, and rural communities!

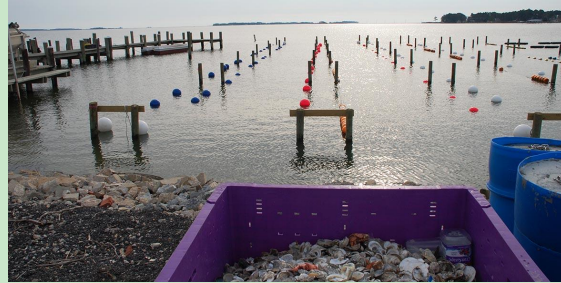
For Commercial Watermen & Aquaculture Producers

Maryland Shellfish Listening Sessions

The University of Maryland Extension Aquaculture Team is hosting listening sessions across the state to gather input from the aquaculture community to develop programs that address current needs and support policies that will ensure industry growth.

By participating, individuals will:

- Identify barriers to industry growth
- Highlight opportunities for innovation and collaboration
- Inform future planning and investment priorities
- Discuss issues, problems, and the needs in building a successful and profitable aquaculture business in Maryland.



Extension faculty will provide educational support materials, publications, and videos to equip attendees with the tools and knowledge necessary to create and operate a thriving business.

In-person sessions will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the following dates:

February 4, 2026 - Calvert County Extension Center, 30 Duke Street, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

February 11, 2026 - Wicomico County Extension Center, 28647 Old Quantico Road, Salisbury, MD 21801

Lunch and snacks will be provided.

For more information, contact Matt Parker, PhD., Aquaculture Business Specialist, University of Maryland Extension, at 301.226.7436 or mparke11@umd.edu.

[Registration Link](#)



Financial Programs for Watermen, Shellfish Farmers, and Seafood Processors

Maryland Watermen's Microloan Program: Low-interest loans up to \$40,000 for the purchase of workboats, outboard motors, and seafood-harvesting gear. Applicants must hold a TFL or a commercial harvester license from DNR or the Potomac River

Fisheries Commission.

Maryland Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Fund: Low-interest loans up to \$100,000 for the purchase of: seed/spat, shell, and equipment. Applicant must hold or have applied for a DNR Aquaculture Lease.

Maryland Remote Setting Shellfish Aquaculture Loan Fund: Low-interest loans up to \$30,000 for the purchase of: seed/spat, shell, and equipment (Tanks, Pumps, Blowers, etc.). Applicant must hold or have applied for a DNR Nursery Permit.

Maryland Oyster Shucking House Loan Program: Low-interest loans up to \$250,000 to finance the renovation, construction, or expansion of an oyster processing facility, or to purchase oyster processing equipment. Applicants must hold a TFL and a Seafood Dealers License (or agree to obtain one).

[Visit our Website for more information](#)

MARBIDCO Loan Program

Agribusiness Equipment and Working Capital Loan Fund

The program helps address the unique financing needs of Maryland's agribusinesses that are not otherwise able to obtain commercial financing for working capital and equipment purchases from

traditional commercial lenders such as banks or farm credit associations by offering moderate-cost loans up to \$100,000.

Minimum / Maximum Loan Amounts: \$15,000 / \$100,000

Loan Terms: Equipment: 3 to 8 years (with up to 12 months interest-only possible). Operating Loan: 1 to 2 years (with up to six months interest-only possible).

MARBIDCO Interest Rates:

- With a partnering public sector lender involved, 4.75%.
- Without a partnering public sector lender, 6.75%.

Loan Origination Fee: 1% of the loan amount

Equity Requirement: Typically, 10% of a project's total cost.

Public Sector Lender Participation: A public sector commercial lender may participate in the application process by both committing to a certain level of matching financing and by completing a form that is included in the application packet.

Commercial Lender Involvement: If an applicant is coming without a public sector lender, then a commercial lender provides a credit denial letter or completes the commercial lender referral form included in the application packet.

Personal Guarantee: Required. All loans made to a business entity must be personally guaranteed by the owners of the business.

Send Completed Applications to: MARBIDCO Agribusiness Loan Program, 1410 Forest Drive, Suite 21, Annapolis, MD 21403, or info@marbidco.org.

For more information about these programs, contact **Brian** Cadden, Financial Programs Officer at bcadden@marbidco.org or 410-267-6807.



[More information](#)

Rural Land Preservation Facilitation Programs



For more information about these programs, contact Allison Roe, Financial Programs Officer/Program Coordinator, or Sierra Criste, Financial Programs Specialist, by telephone at (410) 267-6807, or

Financing for Beginning Farmers: *Down Payment Help from MARBIDCO*

In addition to our other loan and grant programs, MARBIDCO offers programs that help preserve rural land.

Two of these programs also assist beginning farmers with purchasing farms.

These opportunities include the Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program (Next Gen) and the Small Acreage Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program (SANG).

Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program (Next Gen)

The Next Gen Program is a farmland conservation easement option purchase program designed to help facilitate the transfer of farmland that is typically over 50 acres to a new generation of farmers while helping

by email at aroe@marbidco.org
and scriste@marbidco.org



Next Gen

SANG

to preserve the agricultural land from future development.

Under the Next Gen Program, MARBIDCO will pay up to 51% of the Fair Market Value (FMV) of the land only (with a cap of \$500,000). Following the land sale transaction, the Next Gen Farmer will have several years to sell the permanent easement to a rural land preservation program that is able and willing to hold it, thus extinguishing the property's development rights forever.

Small Acreage Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program (SANG)

The SANG program is available to help qualified young or beginning farmers who have trouble entering the agricultural profession because of relatively high farmland costs and limited access to adequate financial capital purchase smaller farmland properties of 10 to 49 acres.

Using the SANG Program, MARBIDCO can provide 30% to 60% of the Fair Market Value (FMV) (land-only) in exchange for a permanent agricultural conservation easement, and that money is used as a down payment to purchase the farmland. Similar to the Next Gen program, most approved SANG Program farm purchases can be completed in about six months. A commercial lender must also be involved in the transaction.

MARBIDCO WEBSITE <https://www.marbidco.org/>

We hope you will visit our website frequently to discover our many financing opportunities.

Where in Maryland is MARBIDCO?



MARBIDCO Executive Director Stephen McHenry (standing) and Paige Hargett (seated far right), an Ag Lending Manager with Horizon Farm Credit and MARBIDCO Board member conducted a breakout session "Get Collaborative with Capital" at the MDFB Convention.

A Very Busy Winter for the MARBIDCO Team

MARBIDCO attended several conferences and banquets this past fall and winter, including:

- UMES Small Farm Conference
- Annual MAEF Banquet and Auction
- Agriculture Law Education Initiative (ALEI) Conference
- Baltimore County Farmers Fair
- Rural Maryland Council - RMC Summit
- Southern Maryland Crops Conference and Dinner
- MDFB Young Farmer Next Gen Summit
- 110th Maryland Farm Bureau Convention and Meeting of Delegates
- MACo/Rural Regional Councils Winter Meeting
- 51st East Coast Commercial Fishermen's and Aquaculture Trade Exposition
- 27th Annual Future Harvest Conference

Upcoming Agricultural Event



25th Women in Agriculture Regional Conference

This annual conference is being held on February 11, 2026, at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club, 500 Marina Club Road, Stevensville, MD

REGISTRATION: <https://2026wiaconf.eventbrite.com>



Southern Maryland Ag Resource Fair

Coming on February 25, from 3:00–6:00 p.m. at The Barns at New Market, located at 29133 Thompson Corner Road, Mechanicsville, MD. The event brings together producers for networking, education, and access to farm-related services. The event will include Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties.

MARBIDCO is a nimble, quasi-governmental financial intermediary organization with a mission to serve Maryland's commercial farming, forestry, and seafood industries exclusively. Young and beginning farmers are a special focus for MARBIDCO, as is farm operation diversification. Since 2007, MARBIDCO has approved some 1,511 financings totaling more than \$121 million for food and fiber business projects located in all of Maryland's counties – and in the process has leveraged more than \$242 million in commercial lender financing. For more information, call us at 410-267-6807 or by email at info@marbidco.org or visit our website www.marbidco.org



MARBIDCO

MARBIDCO offers funding programs for assisting with purchasing farms and real estate, programs for forestry businesses, commercial watermen, shellfish aquaculture, and seafood, plus grant incentive programs, local and regional sponsored programs, and additional loan programs.

For more information about MARBIDCO financial programs, please click below for our MARBIDCO Program Summary PDF.

[Program Summary](#)

MARBIDCO Staff

Including Key Programmatic Responsibilities

Stephen McHenry, Executive Director

smchenry@marbidco.org

- New Business Development
- Stakeholder Relations
- General Management/Programmatic Oversight

Stacy Kubofcik, Assistant Director

skubofcik@marbidco.org

- MRBIFF Loans
- Maryland Oyster Shucking House Loans
- Loan and Grant Oversight Reviews

Brian Cadden, Financial Programs Officer

bcadden@marbidco.org

- MRBIFF Loans
- Agribusiness Equipment/WC Loans
- Vineyard/Hopyard/Orchard Planting Loans
- Forestry Equipment/WC Loans
- Wood Product Industry Grant Program

Sierra Criste, Financial Programs Specialist

scriste@marbidco.org

- Agribusiness Equipment/WC Loans
- Next Generation Programs
- MRBIFF Loans
- Livestock Processing Equipment Grants

Daniela Merkle, Loan Administration Specialist

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- Loan Processing and Workouts
- Local Government Cost Share Grants

Brittany Rawlings, Financial Programs Specialist

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- Shellfish Aquaculture/Watermen Loans
- MD Large Animal Vet Loan Program
- Select grant programs

Allison Roe, Financial Programs Officer/Program

Coordinator aro@marbidco.org

- Next Generation Programs
- Maryland Livestock Processing Loans
- MRBIFF Loans

Tina Wilkins, Senior Accounting Coordinator

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- Collections and Workouts

LeeAnn McCullough, Administrative Specialist,

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- Billings and Collections

Jill Zarend, Communications Specialist

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- Outreach and Events
- Website, marketing and media



MARBIDCO | 1410 Forest Drive, Suite 21 | Annapolis, MD 21403 US

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