



MARBIDCO

MARBIDCO MATTERS

Fall issue Vol. VI

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.



WHAT'S NEW @ MARBIDCO

**WPIEI Grant Closes
November 14**

**Maryland Livestock
Processing Equipment
Grant Program Closes
October 24**



MARBIDCO authorized **\$125,000** in funding for FY 2026 to offer the **Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Incentive Program (WPIEI)**.

“In FY 2026, MARBIDCO aims to incentivize one large-scale high impact project focused on **value-added production and job creation/expansion**. A competitive review will involve higher priority towards a project meeting these criteria.” said MARBIDCO Executive Director, Steve McHenry.

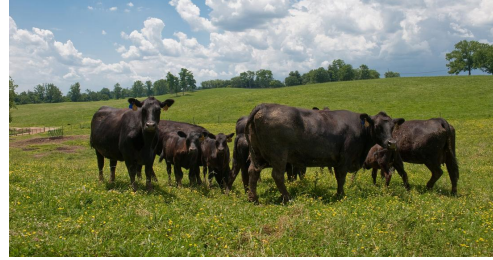
Applicants should specify if their project will be “value-added”. A value-added product is defined as: “a basic wood product manipulated in such a way so as to command additional market value”. In addition, applicants should specify in their application and business plan the number of jobs expected to be created by their proposal and the type of job.

The WPIEI Program offers up to a 25% matching grant, up to the maximum amount allowed, for the purchase of equipment or facilities improvement. An ancillary objective of this program is to complement the financial services offered by private commercial lenders by leveraging funds to facilitate larger scale projects which will enable industry growth.

This program will help a Maryland wood fiber processor or manufacturer engage in **increased production and utilization of locally sourced wood fiber, improve business operations, and pursue new market opportunities** with a focus on value-added production.

Eligible applicants include primary or secondary wood products processors. Applicants can include sole proprietorships, partnerships, cooperatives, corporations, and LLCs. **Grant funds and matching funds must be used for equipment and capital asset purchases that have a useful life of seven years or more.**

MARBIDCO seeks applications for projects or



MARBIDCO's Maryland Livestock Processing Equipment Grant Program assists with the much-needed expansion of livestock processing capacity in Maryland.

This program offers grants to eligible applicants to purchase livestock processing equipment and/or upgrade facilities to help increase production in Maryland, with a particular focus on large animal and blue catfish processing. Smaller scale poultry processing projects may also be eligible.

MARBIDCO will contribute up to 50% towards the eligible costs, with a maximum grant award of \$50,000 for USDA-inspected slaughter facility projects (including meat and blue catfish processing), and a maximum grant award of \$20,000 for other USDA-inspected facilities, secondary blue catfish processing for commercial distribution, custom-exempt processing, or mobile processing projects.

Eligible applicants include individuals and businesses who currently operate livestock and meat processing enterprises in Maryland, as well as those that can start such operations by no later than December 31, 2025. These applicants can include sole proprietorships, partnerships, cooperatives, corporations, or LLCs.

Eligible expenses: Grant funds (and matching funds paid by the applicant) must be used to purchase livestock and meat processing equipment and/ or upgrade facilities for USDA-inspected facilities, custom-exempt or mobile processing projects. Eligible expenses incurred prior to September 2, 2025, are not eligible to be reimbursed using these grant funds. **The**

purchases that will improve operations, increase productivity and/or workforce expansion, support the production of value-added wood products, or aid in the pursuit of new markets.

For one project, MARBIDCO will match up to 25% of total project cost, with a maximum grant award not to exceed \$125,000. All equipment purchases must be made (and facility improvement contracts let) by no later than May 31, 2026. (Please note too that any equipment or capital asset purchase made before September 1, 2025, are ineligible for this program.)

The application submission deadline is November 14, 2025. Applicants will be notified by January 15, 2026, if they have been approved. **Electronic submissions of applications are encouraged.** Applications received in the U.S. Mail and postmarked no later than November 14, 2025, will also be accepted.

For more information about the WPIEI program please contact Brian Cadden at 410-267-6807, or by email at: bcadden@marbidco.org. Send electronic applications to bcadden@marbidco.org or mail to MARBIDCO, WPIEI, c/o Brian Cadden, 1410 Forest Drive, Suite 21, Annapolis, MD 21403.

Maryland Livestock Processing Equipment Grant Program application deadline is October 24, 2025.

For more information about the MARBIDCO Livestock Equipment Grant program please contact Sierra Criste, at 410-267-6807 or by email at: scriste@marbidco.org.

Send electronic applications to scriste@marbidco.org or mail to MARBIDCO, Livestock Equipment Grant, c/o Sierra Criste, 1410 Forest Drive, Suite 21, Annapolis, MD 21403.

WPIEI Grant

Livestock Grant



Joseph Milone, PhD, Agricultural Programs Manager, Department of Commerce, above and Katie Zenk, below, Executive Director of the Maryland Food Center Authority, join the MARBIDCO Board of Directors.

Joseph Milone and Katie Zenk join MARBIDCO Board of Directors

MARBIDCO is very pleased to announce that it has two new Board members who bring diverse backgrounds and experience to help lead our organization: Joseph Milone, PhD, and Katie Zenk Joseph Milone, PhD, and Katie Zenk.

Dr. Milone comes from the Department of Commerce, as its Agricultural Programs Manager.

He is passionate about advancing agriculture in the State. Currently, his focus is on enhancing the agricultural sector and resource-based industries in Maryland by leveraging emerging technologies and fostering strategic partnerships.

Ms. Zenk is the Maryland Food Center Authority's Executive Director. She took on this position in August of this year.

Ms. Zenk is experienced in food systems, agricultural economics, and public policy, most recently serving in key leadership roles at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, including as Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs.



Her background spans both the public and private sectors, including work on Capitol Hill and with agricultural cooperatives, where she led federal policy efforts to strengthen food supply chains and support producers.

Ms. Zenk succeeded longtime Executive Director Dr. Don Darnall, who retired earlier this year after more than 30 years of service and 16 years on the MARBIDCO Board of Directors.

MARBIDCO Loan Program

Forestry Equipment and Working Capital Loan Fund



The Forestry Equipment and Working Capital Loan Fund addresses the unique financing needs of Maryland's forest products-related businesses for working capital and equipment purchases.

All applications must be originated by the applicant. Cooperative Extension agents, Maryland Forest Service, county agricultural marketing officials, and other business professionals may assist in the development of applications. Applications are processed as they are received.

Loan Terms and Conditions

Minimum/Maximum Loan Amounts: \$15,000 / \$150,000

Loan Terms: Equipment Loan: 3 to 6 years. Operating Loan: 1 to 2 years.

MARBIDCO Interest Rate: This will be established on a case-by-case basis based on the level of anticipated credit risk. The minimum interest rate for any loan made under this program will be 6.25% (Fixed rate).

Loan Origination Fee: 1% of the loan amount

Equity Requirement: Typically, 5-10% of a project's total cost.

Lender Participation: Required. A commercial lender must participate in the application process by providing a letter of referral. An attachment to be completed by a financial institution describing current loan obligations is found near the end of the application form found at the link below.

For more information reach out to Brian Cadden at bcadden@marbidco.org. Send Completed Applications to: MARBIDCO Forestry Loan Program, 1410 Forest Drive, Suite 21, Annapolis, MD 21403, or email to bcadden@marbidco.org.

Visit WPPI

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



Next Gen

SANG

Financing for Beginning Farmers *Down payment Support from MARBIDCO*

In addition to our other loan and grant programs, MARBIDCO offers programs that facilitate the preservation of 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 essentially 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 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 the permanent easement - thus extinguishing the development rights on the property 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 lack of access to adequate financial capital, to purchase smaller farmland properties that are between 10 to 49 acres.

Using the SANG Program, MARBIDCO is able to 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. Most approved SANG Program farm purchases can be completed in 6 to 8



months. A commercial lender is also required to be involved in the transaction.

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

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

Upcoming Agricultural Events

(we hope to see you at these occasions)

2025 Agricultural and Environmental Law Conference

ALEI hosts an Agricultural and Environmental Law Conference annually. This year's conference will be held in person on November 10, 2025, at the Graduate Hotel in Annapolis.

This event attracts agricultural service providers, attorneys, educators, environmentalists, producers, landowners, policymakers, and students to discuss the complex intersection of environmental regulation and agriculture in Maryland. ALEI prides itself on hosting an event that brings agriculture and conservation experts together in a forum that allows for exchanging ideas and education for conference attendees on current legal topics of interest.

Registration is now available!

[Register Here](#)

UMES Small Farms Conference

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore will hold its annual Small Farms Conference on Oct 24 and 25 at the Wicomico Youth & Civic Center in Salisbury.

[Register Here](#)

RMC 2025 Rural Summit

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) announces its upcoming 2025 Rural Summit: Elevating Maryland through Stronger Rural Communities on November 19 and 20 at The DoubleTree Annapolis.

Join RMC for in-depth conversations and collaboration around key rural priorities. Don't miss this opportunity to connect, learn, and lead. This year's Summit will offer:

- Insight into current issues and potential legislation impacting rural areas
- Valuable networking opportunities with up to 300 participants, including many of the State's top elected and appointed officials



Paul Goeringer, Principal Faculty Specialist & Extension Specialist, University of Maryland will give a 2025 agricultural and environmental law update with a 2026 outlook, covering recent state right-to-farm rulings, evolving PFAS litigation and regulation, and key legislative changes impacting agriculture.

- Voices from across rural Maryland, sharing experiences, challenges, and success stories
- Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from Allegany College of Maryland (ACM) for eligible summit participants, allowing them to apply the experience toward a rural development certification and enhance their professional credentials

More information

MARBIDCO is a nimble, quasi-governmental financial intermediary organization that has a mission to serve exclusively the commercial farming, forestry, and seafood industries of Maryland. 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 \$119 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 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

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

Brian Cadden Financial Programs Officer

bcadden@marbidco.org

- MRBIF 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
- MRBIF Loans
- Livestock Processing Equipment Grants

Daniela Merkle Loan Administration Specialist

dmerkle@marbidco.org

- Loan Processing and Workouts
- Local Government Cost Share Grants

Brittany Rawlings Financial Programs Specialist

brawlings@marbidco.org

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

Allison Roe Financial Programs Officer/Program

Coordinator aroe@marbidco.org

- Next Generation Programs
- Maryland Livestock Processing Loans
- MRBIF 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

jkubatko@marbidco.org

- Outreach and Events
- Website, marketing and media

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