



**SMADC Southern Maryland Farmer Mini-Grant Program
Criteria and Guidelines
Grant Opens November 1 and closes December 31, 2019
Awarded by Mid-February 2020**

Stated Purpose: The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) is offering another round of mini-grants. This program designed to assist new and beginning farmers with small start-up projects and assist existing farmers looking to diversify/expand a current agriculture project. The projects should be simple in scope and completed relatively quickly, lasting no more than one year. SMADC awards be will be up to \$2,000 per applicant, and is a one-to-one match by the farmer.

In 2016 SMADC conducted surveys, listening sessions and invited the Southern Maryland farming community to tell SMADC what it needs. The Agricultural Mini-Grant program was established based on what SMADC heard from the farming community. SMADC's mission is to support farms and the future of agriculture in Southern Maryland. We are committed to expanding and promoting a viable market-driven, sustainable, and profitable agricultural farming community.

Examples of Projects that would be considered: Purchase of foundation livestock, purchase of plant stock, marketing and promotion of current farm operation, fencing, hoop house, materials needed for value-added production, and on-farm upgrades to enhance food safety, per compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) produce safety rule.

Agricultural Mini-Grants may not be used for:

- Administrative expenses, or events
- In-kind labor and matching funds from other state or federal grants
- Improvements to current infrastructure, or repairs to existing structures. unless it can be demonstrated that the improvements will expand the overall agricultural economic impact of a current farm project.

Eligibility:

- Applicants residing and farming in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's or St. Mary's counties. Preference is given to individual farms or farmers who apply.
- Youth (16 years and older) who are in or have been in FFA, 4-H, agricultural related programs or classes, or have a farming background are encouraged to apply.
- The applicant must match funds awarded dollar to dollar. For example, if the applicant is awarded \$500, they must put \$500 toward the project budget.
- No more than one application awarded, per applicant during a 12-month period, with a lifetime award limit of \$6,000, whichever comes first.

Funding: For this round of grants (November 1 – December 31, 2019), \$30,000 of funding is available. The number of applicants may exceed the amount of funding available and therefore applications will be ranked. See “Evaluation Criteria” at the end of this document.

Criteria for grant awards:

- Consistent with definition of the Agricultural Mini-Grant stated purpose.
- Demonstrated ability of applicant to initiate, administer and complete project within proposed timeframe and budget.
- Matching funds are required for this grant.
- **One letter of reference from your county’s Soil Conservation District, Farm Bureau, University of Maryland Extension or Economic Development Office**
- If applicant is not 18 years old, letter from parents or guardian allowing them to apply for Agricultural Mini-Grant.
- SMADC reserves the right to review applications, suggest changes, and have the applicant resubmit.

Application Procedure:

1. Applications must be submitted online.
2. Applicants may apply **November 1 through December 31, 2019.**
3. After the applicant submits an application, an email confirmation will be sent to confirm receipt of application.
4. Submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by the SMADC Review Committee.
5. Applicant will be notified if they are awarded the grant, are declined the grant, or if SMADC suggests changes to the application in early February 2020.
6. Grant funds will be disbursed in mid-February 2020.

Terms:

1. Signed agreement between applicant and SMADC
2. At the completion of the project, a report is required to be submitted to SMADC with the following information included:
 - A brief narrative about the project purpose, the impact of the project and one or two photos of project.*
 - Statement of expenditures of both the awarded and the matching funds (attachment).
 - Copies of invoices and receipts (attachment).
3. SMADC will list award recipients on SMADC’s website. Awardees may also be featured on SMADC’s other materials, and SMADC will assist in marketing and promoting of the project. Your award letter and agreement will contain information on how to accomplish this.

Evaluation Criteria: The following chart is used by grant reviewers when evaluating grant applications. It is printed here for your information and reference.

1-5 (5 being the strongest)	Evaluation Criteria for SMADC Mini-Grant Applications
	Is the project well organized, thought out, and explained in a way that makes sense and sounds like it can be carried out successfully within one year?
	Is this a new application (5 for first time applicant).
	The intended project enhances the agricultural economic impact of the farm evident by the applicant's sales outlets.
	Is the outcome of the project realistic and achievable?
	Is applicant an individual farm or farmer? <i>(Weigh higher for individual farm or farmer)</i>
	Total

Contact:

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240-528-8850

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