

**MARBIDCO and SMADC PARTNER TO RESCUE
FARMER'S MARKET 'MARYLAND MARKET MONEY' PROGRAM**

*Maryland Market Money Program matching dollars
help food-insecure Marylanders access wholesome foods and strengthen the farmers'
market community.*

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, is excited to announce that they have partnered with the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) to acquire the Maryland Market Money program (MMM), previously run by the now disbanded Maryland Farmers Market Association.

Maryland Market Money is a statewide food incentive program that provides a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits at select farmers' markets. Each MMM dollar works to help food-insecure Marylanders access wholesome foods, boosts farmers' sales at the markets, and strengthens the farmers market community.

[SMADC](#), a Southern Maryland regional entity that works closely with farmers and farmers' markets and that has extensive knowledge of the MMM program, has partnered with MARBIDCO, a statewide-serving agribusiness development organization with a long track record of successfully running financial assistance programs, to reinstate and also hopefully expand the reach of the MMM program.

[MARBIDCO](#) is collaborating with SMADC to facilitate the program, and as the fiscal agent has the capacity to accept and distribute MMM-designated funds. The day-to-day management of the program will be delegated to SMADC staff. SMADC's Director, Shelby Watson-Hampton, provides added expertise having worked previously for the Maryland Department of Agriculture on the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and possesses extensive knowledge of farmers' markets in Southern Maryland and across the State.

The MMM program provides farmers markets statewide with funds - via a combination of county, state, and privately-raised grant monies – to provide low-income SNAP/EBT, WIC and Senior FNMP customers with additional resources to match their federal benefits.

For example, if an eligible customer comes into a farmer’s market with \$5 in SNAP benefits, they could receive an additional \$5 in Maryland Market Money as a match to use for more purchases at the market. This allows them to buy more fresh produce and eligible farm products. Therefore, not only does the participating customer benefit from the \$10 in food product purchases, the farmers benefit from the increase in extra product sales.

The following federal nutrition benefits can be matched with the Maryland Market Money program at participating farmers' markets:

- Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) for Seniors and WIC
- eWIC (Women, Infant, and Children Fruit & Vegetable Benefit Program)
- SNAP/EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

The match does differ slightly among the benefits programs; the SNAP benefit match is limited to \$5 per customer per market day, as is eWIC benefit. However, there is an unlimited dollar-for-dollar match for the FMNP benefit coupons.

The success and impact of the program has been far-reaching: In 2019 the MMM program served 21,873 Marylanders in 7,291 food-insecure households, and spent \$455,128 in federal nutrition benefits and MMM matching dollars with 416 agricultural producers at 36 farmer’s markets across the State.

“SMADC is excited to partner with MARBIDCO to continue to run this vital program for the consumers and farmers of Maryland”, said SMADC Director Shelby Watson-Hampton. “The Maryland Market Money program is a great fit for our organization and aligns directly with SMADC’s mission to support farms and the future of agriculture in Southern Maryland and beyond.”

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The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), a division of

the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, is committed to: a) a market-driven and sustainable farming future as Maryland transitions away from tobacco. b) a Maryland where farmland preservation, and environmental stewardship positively impact the quality of our air and water and c) cultivating awareness among consumers and leaders of the vital role our farms play in a balanced community, safe, nutritious food and a cleaner and healthier environment. To learn more about additional programs and resources, contact SMADC, P. O. Box 745, Hughesville, MD 20637; phone: 240-528-8850, fax: 301-274-1924; email info@smadc.com ; or visit www.smadc.com.

MARBIDCO was established by the Maryland General Assembly to help enhance the sustainability and profitability of the State's agricultural and resource-based industries in order to help bolster rural economies, support locally-produced food and fiber products, and preserve working farm and forest land. MARBIDCO is a nimble, quasi-public financial intermediary organization which 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. In delivering its financing programs, MARBIDCO works cooperatively with commercial banks and Farm Credit Associations, as well as, a host of federal, State, regional and local government agencies and universities. For more information about MARBIDCO's programs, please visit: www.marbidco.org, or send an email to: info@marbidco.org.