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**CECIL COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Cecil County Awarded RMPIF Grant**

**Elkton, Maryland** – The Cecil County Office of Economic Development (OED) is pleased to announce that Cecil County has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$68,500 from the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) to support the County's incubation program. The RMPIF targets investments that will promote economic prosperity in Maryland's rural communities through rural regional cooperation, facilitation of entrepreneurial activities and support of key community partners.

In August 2016, the Cecil County OED applied to the Rural Maryland Council for grant funds to assist with costs associated with the implementation of the County's incubation program.

An Incubator Feasibility Study and Business Plan was completed in October 2015. The plan provided justification to develop and implement an incubation program to assist startup companies and entrepreneurs with securing the resources needed to be successful. Preliminary steps have been successfully accomplished through the provision of staff hours and expertise by Cecil County government and the donation of office space from Cecil College. The recommendation of the Incubator Feasibility Study and Business Plan is to create a 501c3 non-profit organization and to hire a navigator to manage the incubator program efficiently. The manager will seek out entrepreneurs, provide direct support, establish a mentoring program, connect post-secondary educational institutions and resources, and seek additional funding through state, local, and federal entities.

The Cecil County Office of Economic Development has established an Advisory Board to support the implementation of the incubator program and to assist in carrying out the terms of the grant award. The Board is comprised of industry, academia and government agencies. With the initial grant to hire a manager secured, the Cecil County Incubator Advisory Board is currently developing a job description and priorities for next steps.

For additional information please contact Susan O'Neill with the Office of Economic Development at 410-996-6292 or [soneill@ccgov.org](mailto:soneill@ccgov.org).

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