



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

**Wes Moore**, Governor  
**Aruna Miller**, Lt. Governor  
**Kevin Atticks**, Acting Secretary  
**Steven A. Connelly**, Deputy Secretary

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building  
50 Harry S Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
mda.maryland.gov

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading  
Industry

**410.841.5885** Baltimore/Washington  
**410.841.5846** Fax

## Maryland Department of Agriculture

### Legislative Comment

**Date: January 30, 2025**

**BILL NUMBER:** SENATE BILL 226

**SHORT TITLE:** MARYLAND FARMS AND FAMILIES PROGRAM - ALTERING USE OF FUND

**MDA POSITION:** SUPPORT

---

Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) manages the Maryland Farms and Families Fund. The Program's purpose is to double the purchasing power of food-insecure residents of Maryland with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables and to increase revenue for farmers through the redemption of federal nutrition benefits at Maryland farmers' markets and farm stands.

Budgeted at \$300,000 annually, this program matches purchases made with MDA's Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) funds, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) funds.

This program has issued grants to non-profits as required by the current legislation. The sole recipient had been the Maryland Farmers Market Association until the organization dissolved in 2020. Since then, a combination of the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission and MARBIDCO (Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation) have received the grant to run the Maryland Market Money program statewide and subcontracted SMADC to manage and distribute the fund.

This legislation will streamline the funding allocation process by allowing MDA to manage the program directly with an existing Inter Agency Agreement with the Tri County Council of Southern Maryland (TCCSMD). The only applicants MDA has ever had for the fund have been the Maryland Farmers Market Association and then MARBIDCO on the behalf of SMADC and FFARMD on the behalf of SMADC. MDA is required to grant the fund to a nonprofit, SMADC is a subsidiary of the TCCSMD, neither of which are nonprofits, rather government entities. It is time consuming to do the RFP, get legal review, get contracts done and then money out the door. Because the contract has repeatedly been issued to the same entity, MDA is requesting to streamline the process by granting the fund directly to SMADC via the TCCSMD.

MDA thanks the Committee for your consideration and requests a favorable report on SB 226. If you have additional questions, please contact Rachel Jones, MDA Director of Government Relations at [Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov](mailto:Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov) or (667) 408-0134.