

Mid-Shore Regional Council

FY26 Scope of Work

Federal Identification Number: 52 - 2340230

Background

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) is a cooperative regional planning and development unit for Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties to foster physical, economic, and social development. The Council initiates and coordinates plans and projects for the development of human and economic resources. The MSRC was created via enabling legislation signed by the Governor of Maryland on May 15, 2001. The Council is a tax-exempt body politic and corporate. The current statutory authority for the MSRC is Sections 13-901 through 13-910 of the Economic Development Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Objectives and Activities

1. Develop strategies to ensure proper physical infrastructure and economic development plans are in place.

Actions:

1. Facilitate annual CEDS process and coordinate project implementation.
2. Communicate regularly with Federal, State, regional and local economic development partners to foster and enhance coordination of the region's economic development initiatives.
3. Assist with the implementation of the Broadband Deployment Plans for the Eastern Shore.
4. Provide necessary grant writing, strategic planning and legislative assistance.
5. Continue to convene infrastructure advisory committee meetings as needed.
6. Upon receipt of funds, meet requirements of funding agreements to ensure access to these sources on an ongoing basis.
7. Support policies and business development strategies that promote alternative approaches to profitable agriculture.
8. Provide governance of the regional transit project Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST).

Deliverables:

- Update CEDS and ensure eligibility for EDA funds.

- Continue to partner with the Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Inc. to promote their services, such as working with the local Chambers of Commerce in an effort to promote services as they become available.
- Assist/facilitate EDA applications and implementation of CEDS projects.
- Assist Talbot County with the Regional Medical Facility EDA grant.
- Continue to partner with Shore Gourmet, Inc. to promote and assist value-added agriculture and specialty food businesses in the region.
- Administer regional transit program and disseminate results to member counties.

Timeframe: July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

2. Diversify the local economy.

Actions:

1. Coordinate private sector/government partnerships for constructing and funding sophisticated business facilities and that enable the recruitment of innovative world class companies into the Mid-Shore region.
2. Serve as a liaison between private sector and public policy makers to remove local barriers to economic development.
3. Continue to evaluate and provide solutions to integrate immigrant workers into local companies.
4. Assist with implementation of the recommendations in the Mid-Shore Economic Adjustment Strategy.
5. Provide grant writing, strategic planning, and legislative assistance to develop entrepreneurial infrastructure and access to private capital.
6. Identify needs and opportunities for future projects.

Deliverables:

- Convene work force advisory committees as needed.
- Continue to partner with the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center in supporting its purpose to stimulate and support entrepreneurship.
- Support the resource based industries in the Mid-Shore Region
- Assist with the Dorchester Regional Incubator as requested
- Monitor the State of Maryland's Mid Shore Health Improvement Coalition (created by Senate Bill 498 during the 2023 General Assembly Session) particularly the final stated purpose to "Enhance rural economic development in the mid-shore region".

Timeframe: July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

3. Maintain operations and funding for MSRC.

Deliverables:

- Acquire state, local, and federal funding to support ongoing operations and existing commitments.
- Submit grant applications to EDA for planning assistance funds.
- Coordinate and host all MSRC quarterly meetings and events.

Timeframe: July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

4. Regional Planning

Actions:

1. Continue the support of a regional Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Center.
2. Collaborate with other Regional Councils, state and federal agencies, and universities to leverage assets and acquire essential data and create relevant databases.
3. Support the Master of Science in GIS Management program that trains the next generation of geographic information administrators by linking the educational opportunities at Salisbury University with the GIS community service provided by the regional GIS center.
4. Support the expansion of regional trades and technical programs.

Deliverables:

- Increased communication between towns and counties regarding MSRC activities.
- Regional GIS center operational.
- Continue to fund the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative.
- Facilitate the completion of county or municipal GIS administration projects by the GIS Management graduate students via the Regional GIS Center.
- Future projects and funding sources identified.
- Monthly activity reports to board members and other appropriate parties.
- Assist Chesapeake College with the development of the trades programs and new Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship as appropriate.

Timeframe: July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

5. A strong, unified, and effective voice in the state legislative process.

Actions:

1. Coordinate an annual legislative forum and develop a Mid-Shore legislative agenda.
2. Facilitate a joint meeting with all Eastern Shore Regional Councils.
3. Collaborate with the Rural Maryland Council and other Regional Councils to support statewide initiatives/policies that benefit rural communities.
4. Serve as a liaison between General Assembly members and local elected officials.

Deliverables:

- FY26 Mid-Shore legislative priorities developed.
- Communication and partnerships maintained with key rural leaders and stakeholders.
- Enhanced communication with General Assembly members.
- Organize and host annual meeting and legislative forum.

Timeframe: July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026