



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

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County Executive

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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County Calls for Applications for Critical Farms Program

June 1 Deadline Set

FREDERICK, MD – The Frederick Agricultural Land Preservation Program has opened up an application cycle for the Frederick County Critical Farms program. The Critical Farms program assists full-time farmers in purchasing farmland and also works to preserve the land.

Since the Critical Farms program began in 1994, it has assisted 60 farmers in acquiring farms and preserved more than 8,400 acres of farmland. The program was created to help farmers compete with non-farmer buyers who oftentimes have resources not available to farmers and therefore are in a more competitive position to buy farmland. Through the program, the County pays the farm buyers for an option to acquire an easement. The option agreement requires the new farm owner to apply to either the state easement program and/or other governmental land preservation programs for a period of five years.

In order to apply, applicants must have a ratified contract of sale on a farm that meets the program's minimum criteria. Interested applicants should contact Land Preservation Planner II Shannon O'Neil at (301) 600-1411 or via email at SONeil@FrederickCountyMD.gov by Thursday, June 1, 2023.

Critical Farms is one of several agricultural preservation programs managed by the Frederick County Division of Planning and Permitting. Together, the programs have preserved over 75,000 acres of farmland, of which 71,315 acres have been permanently preserved.



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