



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE
Department of Agricultural Preservation

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News Release

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County Calls for Applications for Critical Farms Program by January 31 *Program Helps Farmers Purchase and Preserve Farmland*

FREDERICK, MD – Farmers interested in purchasing farmland while preserving agricultural land may be eligible for assistance through the Frederick County Critical Farms Program. The 2025 application cycle is now open until 5 p.m. on Friday, January 31.

The Critical Farms Program was created to help farmers compete with other buyers who often have resources unavailable to farmers. Through this program, the County pays farmers for an option to acquire an easement. The option agreement requires the new farm owner to apply to the state easement program and/or other governmental land preservation programs for a period of five years. Since its inception in 1994, the Critical Farms program has facilitated the transfer of ownership for 65 farms, encompassing a total of 9,622 acres of farmland.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must have a ratified contract of sale on a farm that meets the program's minimum criteria. For more information regarding program criteria, scoring, and to apply visit www.frederickcountymd-land-preservation-agriculture.app.transform.civicplus.com/forms/46979.

Questions about the program and application process may be directed to Beth Ahalt, Agriculture Preservation Program Specialist II at 240-549-2125 or via email at BAhalt1@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

Critical Farms is one of several agricultural preservation programs managed by the Frederick County Office of Agriculture. Collectively, these programs have preserved over 78,000 acres of farmland, including 75,051 acres that have been permanently preserved. For more information about the Critical Farms program or other agricultural preservation efforts in Frederick County, please visit www.frederickcountymd.gov/Ag-Pres.

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