



**ROBERT G. CASSILLY**  
Harford County Executive

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**Harford County Awards \$645K in Tourism Grants to Nonprofits With Aim to Increase Overnight Stays**

**BEL AIR, Md.**, (June 23, 2023) - Harford County has awarded nearly \$645,000 in FY 2024 tourism grants to 15 nonprofits aimed at creating more extended or weekend-long events that increase the number of overnight visitors to Harford County.

The grants, funded through the county's six percent hotel tax, were refocused this year under County Executive Bob Cassilly to align with the original intent of the tax and reorganized into two new funds, the Partnership Fund and the Harford Strides Fund.

The Partnership Fund encourages multiple nonprofit groups to plan events to draw guests overnight or longer. Increasing the number of overnight stays will generate additional tourism funding to distribute, which will, in turn, create more overnight visits.

"My administration has reorganized these awards to promote events and activities that draw more people from all over the region to stay overnight here," County Executive Cassilly said. "Those overnight guests will be able to see how much we have to offer in Harford County and will be supporting our small businesses, like restaurants and specialty shops. The more overnight visits, the greater the impact on our local economy."

An overnight visitor to Harford County spends an average of \$1,200 per visit, whereas a day-tripper only spends about \$98 per visit, according to the Maryland Office of Tourism. The average stay in the county is 1.8 days.

Harford County will distribute \$374,620 in Partnership Fund grants. Organizations receiving funds are: Bel Air Downtown Alliance/Ladew Gardens, \$100,000; Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, \$85,000; Maryland Center for the Visual and Performing Arts, \$57,000; Steppingstone Museum Association, \$57,000; Highland Community Association, \$35,000; The Friends of Concord Point Lighthouse, \$19,620; and Havre de Grace Arts Collective, \$15,000.

The Harford Strides Fund gives tourism-related organizations grant money to help them make strides toward qualifying for Partnership Fund money. They must show how they will sustain themselves with other outside funding within three years and how they attract visitors from beyond Harford's borders.

Harford County will distribute \$270,000 in Harford Strides Fund grants. Organizations receiving funds are: Susquehannock Wildlife Society, \$55,000; Cedar Lane Foundation, \$50,000; Hosanna Community House, \$50,000; Havre de Grace Colored School Museum and Cultural Center, \$30,000; Susquehanna Museum of Havre de Grace, \$28,500; Havre de Grace Maritime Museum, \$25,000; Rockfield Foundation, \$25,000; and Discovery Center at Water's Edge, \$6,500.

Organizations that have received tourism grants in the past but did not under the reorganization this year have been advised they can apply for other funding through the Office of the County Executive.

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