



CECIL COUNTY

## **ROUTE 40 REVITALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM**

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) FY 2026  
Funding provided through Cecil County Video Lottery Terminal (VLT)

CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND  
Department of Community Services  
Division of Housing and Community Development  
Office of Economic Development  
200 Chesapeake Blvd  
Elkton, MD 21921



Thank you for your interest in applying for the Cecil County VLT Route 40 Revitalization Grant. PLEASE read the following instructions and requirements carefully.

Grant Contact: Lisa Crouse, Grant Administrator, Housing and Community Development, Department of Community Services: 410.996.8391 | lcrouse@cecilcountymd.gov

**PRIOR TO APPLYING: Consider contacting the Grant Administrator listed above to discuss your project and options so that you can submit a strong application.**

### **PURPOSE OF GRANT**

Route 40 is the main business corridor through Cecil County and revitalizing this area is essential to future economic growth. This aligns with the Economic Development Strategic Priority outlined in Cecil County’s Strategic Plan “to create an environment that encourages economic growth through job creation, business development, and community revitalization.” The purpose of this grant is to assist businesses and organizations striving to improve their exterior image and function, resulting in an enhanced visual appearance and increased utilization of the business by the community.

Please understand that your application will only be considered if your property is located on Route 40 and your project is visible from Route 40. Looking at your business/organization from Route 40, you should be able to clearly see your proposed project’s improvement area. The committee will prioritize applications for REVITALIZATION, not routine maintenance.



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### **BACKGROUND**

In 2008, Senate Bill 3 “Maryland Education Trust Fund Video Lottery Terminals” authorized VLT facilities in Maryland. Penn National Gaming, Inc. opened and now operates Hollywood Casino in Perryville, MD.

The law provides for a percentage of the total statewide VLT revenues to be split among authorized jurisdictions. The revenue is provided through a Local Impact Grant from the State of Maryland and is to be used for improvements in communities in the jurisdiction of the video lottery terminal facility. Total funding allocated is contingent on the passage of the County Executive’s budget by the County Council. Cecil County’s latest 3-year Local Impact Plan began at the start of FY24 and includes the Route 40 Revitalization Grant program.

For fiscal year 2026 (FY26), applications for VLT funds will be accepted for Cecil County’s Route 40 Revitalization Grant Program to improve the exterior visual appearance and function of businesses and organizations facing Route 40 in Cecil County.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Funds requested through this application are limited to businesses and organizations, for profit or non-profit, located within Cecil County, Maryland along the Route 40 corridor, with a Route 40/Pulaski Highway address.

## **GRANT INFORMATION**

- Grant funds are intended to be used by existing businesses and organizations to improve their exterior visual appearance from Route 40.
- Cecil County businesses and organizations, for profit or non-profit, with a Route 40/Pulaski Highway address may submit one application per address.
- Revitalization grant funds for FY26 are to be used now through June 2026. Extensions may be made with prior approval. All funding is contingent upon funding from the State of Maryland and approval of Cecil County Council.
- The maximum award per grant application is \$25,000 for revitalization | \$50,000 for blight removal.
- Applicants must match the funds for which they are applying. For example, if applying for \$25,000, you must already have a minimum of \$25,000 to spend on the project which will cost \$50,000. Your matching funds must be a part of the costs of the grant approved project.
- Applicants must be in good standing with the IRS, State of Maryland, and Cecil County.
- Improvements must be Route 40-front facing or easily visible from Route 40. The mailing address must be Route 40/Pulaski Highway.
- Project designs must be approved by Cecil County Government. The County reserves the right to disqualify a design based on content, aesthetics, appropriate integration within local area, or code violations.
- Projects must improve the exterior façade of the business or organization. Up to 20% of the grant funds may be used for related, specified interior improvements with prior approval.
- The applicant may be either the owner or tenant of the property. If a tenant is the applicant, documentation must be received from the owner authorizing the improvements to their property.
- Grant funds may not be used to pay off debt from prior projects.
- Disbursement of grant funding will only be made on a reimbursement basis. The project must be completed before you will be reimbursed.
- Existing businesses that include residential accommodations will be considered, but the property must be clearly identified predominantly as a business and maintain regular, publicized operating hours.
- Applications for this competitive grant will be accepted on a rolling basis beginning August 1, 2025.
- All grants awarded through the Route 40 Revitalization program are funded by Video Lottery Terminal proceeds.



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**ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:**

- Signage
- Lighting
- Siding
- Painting
- Entrance
- Porch/Deck
- Fencing
- Landscaping/Hardscaping
- Sidewalks
- Driveway
- Parking
- ADA Ramp
- Demolition
- Removal of Blight/Eyesore
- Other revitalizing projects will be considered

**INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:**

- Improvements to primary residence
- Interior renovations
- Improvements not visible from Route 40
- Projects completed prior to application submission

## **SPECIAL 'BLIGHT' APPLICATION**

\$50,000 max per applicant is available for projects that will remove blighted structures along Route 40. The term blight is primarily used to describe a vacant structure or dilapidated building that is detrimental to the safety or health of the community and likely requires demolition. This could be a business structure that is not in use and has fallen into obvious disrepair, is potentially unsafe for the community and/or business and needs immediate rehabilitation.

If you wish your application to be considered for this special funding, please complete that section of the application. If approved, you could be awarded up to \$50,000 with no matching funds required.



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## **PROJECT EVALUATION**

The Grant Review Committee will evaluate all applications based on the following criteria:

- Application is complete, with detailed information.
- Required documents have been submitted.
- Project description clearly indicates that there will be an enhanced and revitalized visual appearance from Route 40.
- Stability of business/organization.
- Positive impact on the business and community.
- The application clearly explains how the grant funds will be used and requested funds do not exceed the maximum limit of \$25,000 (\$50,000 for blight applications).
- The applicant has identified all sources of matching funds.
- Preference may be given to projects using local contractors.
- Additional points may be awarded for blight removal applications.
- The improvements can be implemented with a completion date of June 30, 2026.

**Please understand that the committee will score your application based on the overall value of your project's improvement and the goals of this grant program.**

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

√	<b>REQUIRED DOCUMENTS</b>
	Completed application with cover sheet
	Two years of tax returns, if applicable
	Proof of good standing with IRS, State of Maryland, and Cecil County
	Photos of current property – from Route 40 and close view of project area
	Design and detailed cost estimates of proposed improvements
	Documentation of matching funds - bank account statements/loan information
	Proof of insurance for property and business
	Evidence of site control – tenants must provide written documentation from property owner authorizing the improvement project
	Non-profits only: Exemption determination letter from the IRS

## DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Cecil County Maryland will distribute grant funds on a reimbursement basis following the receipt of invoices and proof of expenditures. The project must be completed prior to submitting the reimbursement request. Grant recipients are responsible for complying with the conditions of the grant award and must provide budgetary and programmatic reports as defined in the Grant Award and Acceptance package.

## IMPORTANT DATES – Dates are subject to change

<b>August 1, 2025</b>	NOFO Release – <b>Applications accepted</b>
As needed	Grant Review Committee Meetings
<b>May 1, 2026</b>	<b>FINAL Deadline for Submission of Applications</b>
As applicable	Notifications to Grant Recipients
July 6, 2026	Final Date to Submit Reimbursement Requests. Extensions may be made with prior approval.
July 15, 2026	Year-end Grant Report Due

## APPLICATION SUBMISSION

- Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis beginning August 1, 2025.
- Completed application and all required supporting documents may be dropped off or mailed to the Cecil County Administration Building, ATTN: Route 40 Revitalization Grant Application, 200 Chesapeake Blvd, Suite 1800, Elkton, MD 21921 or emailed to [lcrouse@cecilcountymd.gov](mailto:lcrouse@cecilcountymd.gov).
- Online applicants will be prompted to create an OpenGov account prior to applying. All supporting documents may be uploaded online.
- The Grant Review Committee will evaluate the applications periodically and will make ongoing awards until funds are expended.
- Applicants will be notified by email of the grant committee's decision.
- Information provided as part of this application is subject to Maryland's Public Information Act request with sensitive and personal information redacted accordingly.