



Advisory Commission on Maryland Alcohol Manufacturing and Promotion Report December 2024



Wes Moore, Governor | Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Background

Established through Chapters 461 and 462 of the 2022 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, the Advisory Commission on Maryland Alcohol Manufacturing and Promotion (Commission) was created as a successor to the Advisory Commission on Maryland Wine and Grape Growing. It is staffed by the Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce).

Reporting

The Commission is required to issue a report each year to the Governor and two legislative committees, per § 5-2111 of the Economic Development Article of the Maryland Code: “The Advisory Commission shall issue a report each year to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee on the Advisory Commission's findings and recommendations.”

The Fund

The legislation creates a Maryland Alcohol Manufacturing Promotion Fund (the Fund), and authorizes the Department to award certain grants from the Fund for certain purposes. Grants may be awarded to eligible applicants to:

- Foster the creation and expansion of the State’s breweries, distilleries and wineries;
- Attract new visitors to the State’s breweries, wineries and distilleries;
- Encourage and create incentives for special events to promote State wineries, breweries and distilleries;
- Educate the public about alcohol manufacturing in the State, including its rich history;
- Support the expansion of minority ownership and participation in the operation of State breweries, wineries and distilleries; and
- Research and develop incentives for how to promote use of the State’s agricultural products in the production of the State’s beer, wine, and spirits.

Composition

The Commission is composed of the following gubernatorial appointees: two members representing breweries; two members representing growers; two members representing wineries; and two members representing distilleries. Additionally, the Commission includes a member representing the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Secretary of the Department of Commerce or designee; Secretary of the Department of Agriculture or designee; Special Secretary of the Governor’s Office of Small, Minority and Women Business Affairs or designee; one member from the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission; one member appointed by the President of the Senate; and one House member appointed by the Speaker of the House. The terms are three years with staggered term dates. The Chair is appointed by the Governor.

Members

- Jaime Windon, Lyon Rum/Windon Distilling, Chair
- Mark Burke, Streetcar 82 Brewing

- Robert T. Butz, Owner & Founder, Windridge Farm, LLC
- Joan Cartier, Ph.D., Co-Owner, Links Bridge Vineyard
- Roy W. Crow, Co-Owner, Crow Vineyard & Winery, LLC
- Joseph A. Fiola, Ph.D., Principal Agent & Specialist in Viticulture and Small Fruit, University of Maryland
- Scott Jende, Scientist, Project Manager, Master Distiller, Patapsco Distilling Company
- Kimberly T. Johnson, Co-Owner & Co-Founder, Philosophy Winery
- Jeffrey Kelly, Maryland Alcohol and Tobacco Commission
- The Honorable Kris Valderrama, Delegate
- The Honorable Craig J. Zucker, Senator

Actions

The Commission advised that there should be an open call for applications to apply for funding for those programs and events that met the overall intention of Chapters 461 and 462 as detailed previously. The Commission then came together on April 29, 2024, to make decisions on the 15 applications that were received.

The Commission put forth to the Secretary of Commerce, Kevin Anderson, the following recommendations for awards:

**Maryland Alcohol Manufacturing Promotion Fund
Fiscal Year 24 Round of Awards**

Carroll Camden Business Association	The mission of Craft x Craft: A Celebration of Craft Alcohol and Collaboration is to amplify the impact of the craft alcohol industry on local communities, the economy, and the state of Maryland through a week-long promotion with collaborative events. The Carroll Camden Business Association (CCBA) and the South Baltimore Brewery District (SBBB) foster a region poised for additional craft alcohol businesses. Currently, Checkerspot Brewing, Pickett Brewing and Wico Street Beer Co. have a grassroots collaboration and host joint events to raise awareness of the industry's impact in the local community and beyond. They hosted two events in 2023, which aimed to expand tourism to the breweries due to their proximity to each other. These events promoted walkability between the breweries and had many beer tourists visit for the first time. The breweries have collaborated on fundraising events for nonprofits in CCBA and local clean-up events. The events proved so successful that two more craft alcohol producers wish to join the SBBB in the coming months.	\$10,000
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<p>Rye Revival/Maryland Distillers</p>	<p>Yearlong campaign promoting the state's distilled spirit in the way that bourbon has become associated with Kentucky.</p>	<p>\$187,000</p>
<p>Preservation Maryland</p>	<p>Whether beer, wine, or spirits, alcohol production has been a staple industry in Maryland since the colonial era. This project, Spirited History: Distilling, Brewing & Winemaking in Maryland, will support a brief study of the history of iconic and everyday alcohol manufacturers in the state's past, as well as key buildings and sites associated with Maryland's long history of brewing, winemaking, and distilling. The focus of the study will be to provide rich, historic detail and stories for marketing and tourism. Utilizing this research, Preservation Maryland (PM) will host several public events around the state at alcohol producing venues to share our findings. These events will not only educate the public, but they also will connect the rich history of the industry to today's craft beverage production and highlight how Maryland remains a world-class producer. In conducting this study and crafting public events around its findings, PM will tell the story of one of Maryland's oldest industries in a new and engaging manner. That study will translate to a variety of different print, video, and social media materials. These materials will be evergreen, so that they may be used for years to come. PM will provide these resources to the breweries, wineries, and distilleries for their marketing use. Overall, the project will connect heritage tourism to the state's breweries, wineries, and distilleries, provide new historical context to a key industry, and prepare the alcohol industry to engage Maryland citizens and tourists during the coming 250th Anniversary of American Independence.</p>	<p>\$42,000</p>

<p>Maryland Distillers Guild</p>	<p>This funding application seeks to enhance the Spirits of Maryland series, an educational and promotional initiative highlighting the state's spirits producers while showcasing many of the minority or women-owned businesses that represent nearly 60% of the state's spirits industry. Held at unique venues statewide, these events offer engaging seminars and allow consumers to interact directly with Maryland's diverse distillery landscape. Consumer education is crucial for building loyalty and recognition for Maryland-made spirits. By educating consumers and industry partners such as retailers and wholesalers, this series fosters brand loyalty and appreciation for the craft. Topics covered include spirits knowledge, industry history, and cocktail mixing techniques, among others. Moreover, outreach efforts will extend beyond promoting the educational series. Ongoing promotions will incorporate educational content to engage and inform consumers continually. As local consumers become more informed about Maryland's rich spirits history, existing distilleries and new businesses are encouraged to invest in the state's industry, ultimately increasing the number of producers. This growth boosts confidence among distilleries and enriches the industry's diversity and vitality. As a result of consumer education and advocacy for Maryland spirits, distilleries anticipate increased traffic and revenue in their tasting rooms and in the retail market.</p>	<p>\$65,000</p>
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<p>Wineries</p>	<p>Competition: By marketing and promoting the two state competitions, and piggybacking on the tri-industry branding and marketing campaign, the wine industry can better get in front of audiences it has struggled to interest previously.</p> <p>Promote Through Special Events: A public component to the state Governor’s Cup Wine Competition creates another opportunity to reinforce that we produce wines on par with our more visible east coast neighbors.</p> <p>Educational Outreach: The two wine competitions are promoted through press releases after each competition, and an internal-audience focused award ceremony. A public component to the Governor’s Cup competition gives the public a “behind the scenes” to how competitions are administered, and creates an experience where attendees learn more about the grape growing, and wine making, processes.</p> <p>Support the expansion of minority ownership and participation: Minority-owned wine businesses tend to be smaller, and in general smaller wineries have less access to capital. To encourage these businesses to enter their wines in the competitions, funds will offset the cost of entry fees, and shipping wines to the competitions. Funds can also be used for wineries to enter other national competitions, which also raises the state’s visibility.</p> <p>Incentives for using more Maryland ingredients: Competitions provide important feedback to winemakers about how to improve their product; wineries understand wine flaws they might not otherwise be aware of. The Comptroller’s Cup - which has a peer judging component - lets winemaker judges taste wines from a variety of state wineries. The Governor’s Cup - which is Maryland appellation wines only - creates a prestige component to sourcing state grapes. Tasting highly-rated wines from peers has a positive impact.</p>	<p>\$192,500</p>
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<p>Maryland Wineries Association - 2 of 3</p>	<p>Vintage Report: The report will act as an internal, educational tool for the industry to understand how each region was impacted by the year's weather, and serve as an external marketing piece to illustrate the maturation of the industry. Virginia and New York have annual vintage reports that are a long-time part of their marketing efforts, which demonstrates internally and externally that the viticulture component is critical to the success of their wine industries.</p> <p>Educational Outreach: Wine is unique from other craft alcohol in that it directly is made from grapes and therefore subject to the variability of each harvest. Famous winemaking regions have embraced this dynamic and market each vintage through an annual report. This type of publication, especially with university partnership, lends credibility to the artisan nature of Maryland wine. Dr. Fiola will put out shorter, more informal, reports to the industry leading up to harvest. The Vintage report will be released after all winery and vineyard data is collected. This information will be housed online so that grape growers can access the information year round, and create a historical basis for understanding the opportunities and challenges of growing grapes in Maryland.</p> <p>Research and develop incentives to use state agriculture products: Now that the 51% ingredient, or 20 acre requirement will be in effect May 1st, linking the wine industry to state agriculture is more crucial than ever, to encourage wineries to use the state grapes available for sale, and to expand vineyard acreage when possible. The vintage report will also be shared with state legislators to educate them about the industry's agricultural impacts.</p>	<p>\$45,000</p>
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<p>Maryland Wineries Association - 3 of 3</p>	<p>Maryland Wine Experience: This is designed to grow and expand its offerings each year. This will be done through stronger marketing and promotion through a marketing and PR professional who will be hired to promote this event, and coordinate the larger promotion of the industry. Additionally, the tri-industry app will be better utilized to increase users and more aggressively promote the industry.</p> <p>Promote Special Events: The recent 2nd Annual Maryland Wine Experience demonstrated that the public is interested in learning about our state's wine history and industry. There was a 30% increase in attendance for the Grand Tasting, and the master classes were completely full. Topics included 1) making a Bordeaux blend wine, led by two winemakers; 2) an Oyster + Wine pairing seminar, partnering with the Oyster Recovery Partnership; 3) a sampling and discussion of Italian wine varietals, showcasing Italian wines, as well as Italian varietals grown in Maryland and made into Maryland wine; and 4) a Wine Cocktails class, to highlight the ways wine and spirits can produce complex cocktails. This included Baltimore Spirits Company, a member of the Maryland Distillers Guild.</p> <p>Educating the Public: The industry succeeds when there is local, regional and national demand for our wines. The way to foster this environment is to make consumers more aware of the high-quality wines being produced in our state through sophisticated marketing and promotion of our state's wine industry activities. This has proven to work in Virginia and New York, where dedicated marketing and promotion funds have increased consumer awareness and created a supportive environment for winery businesses.</p>	<p>\$128,500</p>
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<p>Brewers Association of Maryland - 1 of 2</p>	<p>This application seeks funding to activate the tri-industry brand developed with awards from the MAMPF in 2023, focusing on promoting Maryland's craft beverage alcohol brand and industry. The funds will fuel digital advertising, social influencers, traditional advertising and point-of-purchase campaigns targeting Maryland residents. These efforts highlight the diversity of Maryland craft beverage products and businesses. The initiative targets Maryland residents and businesses in the consumer and retailer market tiers, showcasing the state's craft beverage story appealing to locals and tourists. Commencing in Q4 2024 and extending into 2025; ongoing promotion will necessitate future funding. Future phases of this project involve engaging regional and national food and beverage media, securing local advertising, and targeting travelers at various Maryland entry points. Air and rail travelers arriving at major transportation hubs will encounter targeted advertising encouraging visits to Maryland craft beverage producers. This direct promotion supports Maryland producers, highlights diversity, and encourages new investment, ultimately boosting Maryland's craft beverage industry.</p>	<p>\$400,000</p>
<p>Brewers Association of Maryland - 2 of 2</p>	<p>Enhanced marketing efforts will increase visibility and market penetration for Maryland's craft alcohol, aiding member expansion and consumer base growth.</p> <p>Increased Tourism: Investing in digital tools and marketing will attract more visitors to member sites, boosting sales and economically benefiting local communities.</p> <p>Elevated Event Profile: Supporting events like the Maryland Craft Beer Competition will position BAM as a key industry player, attracting top-tier sponsors and media attention, and showcasing member products.</p>	<p>\$118,250</p>

<p>Maryland Grape Growers Assoc., Inc. (Research)</p>	<p>Growing wine grapes in Maryland requires significant chemical input to cope with high disease pressure, with 12-18 fungicide applications expected in every single season. Some synthetic fungicides commonly used in vineyards not only pose safety concerns to our environment and applicators, but are also prone to fungicide resistance development. Furthermore, certain fungicides have also been shown to interfere with fermentation and ultimately affect wine quality. The Small Fruit Pathology lab at the University of Maryland has been searching for native yeasts with antagonistic ability against key pathogens affecting wine grapes. Out of over 600 strains sampled from local vineyards, several strains have demonstrated high inhibition activity against fruit rots via detached berry assays under lab conditions. Therefore, the objectives of this project are to 1) conduct field trials to validate the efficacy of selected yeast strains for fruit rots control; 2) compare the control efficacies and crop safety among different cultivars; 3) share the research findings with wine grape growers and others. Briefly, the trials will be conducted in the research vineyard at the Wye Research and Education Center, with 5 different cultivars (Cab Franc, Merlot, Chardonnay, Vidal Blanc and Chambourcin) commonly grown in Maryland. In addition to yeast strains, we will also include some commonly used synthetic fungicides as comparisons. The trial will begin in summer right after fruit color change, targeting late-season rots. The spray applications will be continued through harvest, with 4 to 5 applications expected following a 10-14-day interval. Disease incidence and crop safety will be investigated on a weekly basis after the 1st application. All data will be analyzed and shared with stakeholders on annual meetings and field days.</p>	<p>\$40,568</p>
		<p>\$1,228,818</p>

At present, applications have been received and are being reviewed by staff for presentation to the Commission in January 2025.