



Agriculture Law Education Initiative: Local Food Access Grants Project Evaluation

Focus Areas:

Agriculture, data analysis, community outreach

**SUMMER 2026
May 26 – July 31**

This project is being offered through the **University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: *MPowering the State* (MPower)** (<http://mpower.maryland.edu>) – a formal collaboration between the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership provides funding for the program.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The selected student will work with the Agriculture Law Education Initiative (ALEI) at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), in partnership with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDE) and University of Maryland Agricultural Extension (UME) to conduct research into topics across a wide range of complex environmental and agricultural topics.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Two grant funded projects centered on local food access, local food procurement practices, and farmer participation in supplemental nutrition benefits programs are set to conclude in 2026, and will-serve as the primary focus of the UM Scholar's work:

- Educational Support for Increasing the Acceptance of Federal Nutrition Benefits by Maryland Farmers
- Focusing In: Identifying and Addressing Legal Challenges and Educational Needs to Increase Participation in Maryland's Farm to Institution Local Food Purchasing Program

The ALEI project team will be conducting evaluation and reporting activities for both grants. The UM Scholar will assist in participant outreach and collection of evaluations data to gauge project progress toward goals and deliverables. Survey results will be analyzed and incorporated into final grant reports. Additionally, the UM Scholar may contribute to the development of adult educational materials based on the results of research findings, bridge identified gaps, and to help organize a public Maryland symposium to share results with regional partners and collaborators, including an opportunity to present at the event.

Daily responsibilities will include:

- Virtual check-in meetings with Mentor.
- Phone calls/email for evaluation outreach efforts.
- Online writing and research.

The proposed project may include:

- Trips to agricultural operations to learn about their common legal issues that occur related to local food access and procurement.

Skills developed during the internship will include:

- Research
- Writing
- Interviewing
- Survey results analysis
- Grant management and reporting
- Legal research
- Comparison of federal and state laws and policies

IDEAL CANDIDATE

This project is ideal for students with a background in Agriculture or Environmental law and policy, grant management and reporting, local food access and procurement.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Students may be from UMCP's College of Behavioral & Social Sciences, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, College of Arts and Humanities, College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, A. James Clark School of Engineering, Robert H. School of Business, Graduate School, School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, School of Public Policy, or School of Public Health.

PROJECT LOCATION

This project will be conducted in a hybrid format (remote & In-person). Most work and meetings will be conducted remotely and will require strong time management and self-direction skills. Occasional in-person meetings will be required, and additional opportunities to join farm tours with other MPower UM Scholars will be available.

PROJECT LEAD/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Margaret Todd, JD, Senior Legal Specialist and Managing Director for the Agriculture Law Education Initiative at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, Francis King Carey School of Law.

BIO: [Margaret Todd, JD](#)

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More than one student will be considered for this project.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

- 10 weeks/400-hour student research project conducted with schedule mutually defined and agreed upon by the student and mentor.
- The project is funded by the [University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State \(MPower\)](#) and is a part of the [UM Scholars program](#).
- The selected student will receive a stipend for their work, to be paid in multiple installments over the 10 weeks.
 - **\$5,500** for undergraduate students
 - **\$6,500** for graduate students
- Work is expected to occur during typical business hours; Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.
- To be eligible, the student must be enrolled in the Fall 2026 semester.
- Traveling to and from UMB, as well as parking, is the responsibility of the student and costs are included in the stipend.