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MCEDC's 3R Initiative Selected for MEDA Recognition Award

*Statewide honor given to partnership supporting pandemic recovery
for Montgomery County, Maryland restaurants and retailers*

Rockville, Md. – The Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) has selected the 3R Initiative: Reopen, Relaunch and Reimagine program of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) for a statewide recognition award.

“The MEDA Board, recognizing this was a year like no other, created the MEDA Recognition Program to recognize the programs and projects that responded to the pandemic and continue to bring economic prosperity to Maryland. Congratulations to the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation for their innovative 3R initiative, recognized as one of the year’s outstanding programs,” said Pamela Ruff, Executive Director of MEDA.

The MEDA awards celebrate the people, projects and programs that are transforming lives, creating opportunities and enriching communities throughout Maryland. View the MEDA 3R Initiative Recognition Award [video](#) here.

MCEDC created the 3R Initiative, a public-private partnership, to support the reopening and recovery of local restaurants and retail storefronts selected to participate in a year-long pilot project. The ongoing, multi-component program provided financial grants, an online MoCo Marketplace directory to connect consumers to local businesses and technical assistance for select businesses affected by the pandemic. The 3R Initiative began in early 2020 and will continue through the end of 2021, with an emphasis on helping businesses in underserved and disadvantaged communities.

“We knew that the devastating economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic would require creative and innovative strategies to assist businesses in overcoming several challenges,” said Benjamin H. Wu, President & CEO of MCEDC. “We formed this unique public-private partnership to allow restaurants and retail shops to not just continue operations, but to help create new long-lasting approaches in their business model.”

One of the recipients of funding and technical assistance from the 3R Initiative is the Hakuna Matata Grill, an east African restaurant in Silver Spring. Co-owner Tina Mwebaza said, “We needed tents, chairs, lighting, PPE and more to be able to serve customers outside, and to keep employees and customers safe. We received two grants to buy what we needed to create an inviting outdoor space. We couldn’t have done it without the program.”

Among the private sector partners in the 3R initiative are Pepco and the Exelon Foundation, with contributions totaling over \$320,000 to the \$1.5 million program. “We look for the best ways to support our communities,” said Mellanie Lassiter, Senior Manager at Pepco holdings. “We have the responsibility to help our businesses and communities survive during this difficult time. We look for partners on the ground, connected to the community. MCEDC is one of those partners meeting the community at their highest need.”

In addition to on-the-spot assistance to continue operations, the 3R Initiative was also created to help hard hit industries navigate the future and position themselves for post-pandemic growth.

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About MCEDC

The Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) is the official public-private economic development organization representing Montgomery County, Maryland. Created in 2016, MCEDC is led by a Board of Directors of business executives. Its mission is to help businesses start, grow and relocate in Montgomery County by helping them gain access to top talent, business and market intelligence and prime locations. For more information, visit our website. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.