



**MARYLAND** — In early December, the Maryland Department of Agriculture awarded almost \$500,000 in grants focused on Maryland's specialty crops. The eight recipients include, among others, a program that will market and promote apple and honey crops; a public television series covering specialty crops in the state; and University of Maryland programs involving bees, fungi, and food safety. The grants come from the USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.



**NORTH CAROLINA** — Q2 Solutions, a clinical trial laboratory services provider headquartered in Morrisville, announced in late November that it will build a new \$73 million facility in Durham. The aim of the new facility is to take genomics testing and data and turn it into actionable health information. The project will happen in two phases over seven years and is expected to create over 700 new jobs, some with salaries over \$80,000. Q2 received incentive deals from the state totaling more than \$10 million.



**SOUTH CAROLINA** — Only 65 percent of rural South Carolina households had broadband subscriptions in 2017, the smallest share in the Fifth District. But that will soon improve in some rural counties thanks to an \$8.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Home Telecom will receive the funding to install 96 miles of fiber-optic cables in parts of Charleston and Berkeley counties. The improved broadband infrastructure will reach over 3,700 households and almost 40 businesses, farms, and educational facilities.



**VIRGINIA** — In early December, Fairfax County signed 25-year solar power purchase agreements with three teams of solar developers. The agreements will allow the developers to install, own, and manage solar installations that will serve more than 100 government buildings, schools, and parks. The potential savings are estimated at \$60 million in utility costs and 1.2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. The county says it is the largest solar purchase agreement by a locality in Virginia.



**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — An affordable housing nonprofit is making further inroads in Adams Morgan, a neighborhood where a one-bedroom apartment often rents for more than \$2,000. Jubilee Housing Inc. recently acquired its third piece of property on a block of Kalorama Road N.W. The newest purchase is a church that will be converted into temporary housing for up to 20 formerly incarcerated individuals as they transition back into society. Jubilee's previous purchases, including four lots on Ontario Road N.W., will also be turned into affordable housing for lower-income residents.



**WEST VIRGINIA** — Three community development financial institutions (CDFIs) in West Virginia have been awarded almost \$1.5 million from the Treasury Department's CDFI Fund to increase lending and investments in economically distressed areas. The three recipients are Natural Capital Investment Fund, a business loan fund focused on small to mid-sized businesses in central Appalachia and the Southeast; CommunityWorks in West Virginia, a nonprofit that addresses housing needs, including through innovative mortgage lending; and Woodlands Community Lenders, which provides small business financing in Barbour, Randolph, and Tucker counties. CDFIs are specialized financial institutions with a mission to provide affordable lending to low- and moderate-income customers.