

CARES Act Fisheries Funding – Louisiana White Paper

7/7/2020 - DRAFT

CARES Act Facts

- \$300 million total provided for “Assistance to Fishery Participants” in the U.S.
- Louisiana’s allocation was announced in May by NOAA and equals \$14,785,244 (before administrative costs)
- Administered through NOAA Fisheries and payments to fishery participants will come from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC).

Eligibility Requirements

The CARES Act and NOAA Fisheries have established the following eligibility requirements:

- “Fishery Participant” – Tribes, persons, fishing communities, aquaculture businesses, processors, or other fisheries related businesses.
 - Gear and vessel suppliers, repair facilities, retailers, restaurants, and bait and tackle operations are not viewed as fisheries related businesses
- Must have incurred economic revenue losses greater than 35% as compared to the prior 5-year average revenue
- Freshwater fisheries, including wild crawfish are ineligible
- Must reside in the state that is providing funding
- New businesses and entrants in 2020 with no prior revenue history are ineligible

Eligible entities must possess a 2020 LDWF license or permit. If the entity is not legally required to have a license or permit, the entity must show proof that the business is currently active. Eligible entities must have reported seafood sales on LDWF trip tickets in 2018 or 2019. If the entity is not legally required to submit trip tickets, the entity must show proof of business activity in 2018 or 2019. These qualifying criteria are intended to capture those individuals that have been directly affected by COVID-19 and not those that have either entered or exited the fishery prior to or after COVID-19, while also taking into consideration the impacts of the 2019 flood disaster.

Louisiana Spending Plan (IN DEVELOPMENT)

LDWF submitted a draft plan to Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission on July 7, 2020, which must be reviewed and approved by NOAA prior to implementation. LDWF is hopeful implementation will begin sometime in **August**. Below are some highlights from the current draft plan.

- Sector Allocations
 - Will be centered on participant sector (fishermen, dealers, processors, etc.) rather than fishery (crabs, shrimp, oysters, charter, etc.).
 - Will be based on NOAA information they used when allocating between states. LDWF may adjust to account for the size of each sector when determining the allocations.
 - LDWF is prioritizing full-time fishery participants by utilizing certified license endorsements for the commercial fisherman and charter sectors. For the remaining sectors, LDWF will use a comparison of trip ticket landings or revenue compared to other fishery participants in the same sector and fishery.
- Application and Payment Process
 - Identified approximately 12,300 potential applicants
 - Opening date of application period will be dependent upon NOAA approval of the spending plan. However, LDWF intends to have a relatively short application period of six weeks and restrict the application process to a web-based format. LDWF intends to work with a contractor to provide language and application assistance via phone and video chat, or in person.
 - LDWF intends to implement a two phased payment process that will include an initial minimum payment followed by a second payment, the amount of which will be determined by the amount of funds remaining after all applications have been processed. LDWF intends to withhold a percentage of funding from each sector to ensure funding is available for every eligible applicant.