

Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021

APPLICANT: Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)

DURATION: July 1, 2021 – September 30, 2021

TITLE: Louisiana Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 Application and Spending Plan

OBJECTIVE: Distribute Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 economic stimulus relief through direct payment to eligible fishery participants by fishery sector.

Introduction:

In November 2019, the first reports of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19) came from Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Over the next few weeks the virus spread rapidly throughout China and was in nearly every country within a few months. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. COVID-19 directly affected the United States (US) economy due to stay-at-home orders and the closing of all nonessential businesses. The US Government acted quickly to assist the public when Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and it was signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act was an over \$2 trillion economic relief package that contained \$300 million for the US Secretary of Commerce to provide to affected fishery participants. On May 7, 2020, the Secretary of Commerce announced the allocation of \$300 million in fisheries assistance funding provided by Sec. 12005 of the CARES Act, to States, Tribes, and territories with coastal and marine fishery participants who have been negatively affected by COVID-19 (1. NOAA Fisheries 2020). Due to the ongoing adverse impacts of COVID-19 on March 29, 2021 the Secretary of Commerce announced an additional \$255 million in fisheries assistance funding provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (3. NOAA Fisheries 2021). The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 states that funding will support activities previously authorized under Sec. 12005 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

The Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will work with the three Interstate Marine Fishery Commissions, organizations with a demonstrated track record of success in disbursing funds, to quickly deliver financial assistance into the hands of those who need it (2. NOAA Fisheries 2020). Funding for Louisiana (LA) and other Gulf states will be awarded to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) who will administer the distribution for funding based on each states' spending plan, after these spending plans have been approved by NOAA.

The CARES Act establishes those eligible participants as: tribes, commercial fishing businesses, charter/for-hire fishing businesses, qualified aquaculture operations that are not eligible for the USDA Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program, processors or other marine fishery related businesses. Section 12005 of the CARES Act prohibits applicants that are eligible for part 1416 of title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations for losses related to COVID-19 from receiving funds under this program. This section is specific to the agricultural assistance provided in the CARES Act. Applicants under this award may apply for other Federal assistance programs under the CARES Act or other Federal programs, however, funding received from this program and other federal programs shall not exceed the total loss resulting from COVID-19 impacts.

Additional eligibility requires that each participant must have incurred, as a direct or indirect result of COVID-19, economic revenue losses greater than 35% when compared to a 5-year average (2015-2019). Eligible participants in LA include resident commercial fishermen, commercial fishing vessel owners, charter captains, fresh product licensees, wholesale dealer/docks, wholesale dealer/brokers, wholesale dealer processors, and qualified aquaculture facilities growing product in LA or federal waters.

On March 13, 2020, LA Governor John Bel Edwards signed a proclamation that limited gatherings to less than 250 people until mid-April; this proclamation also involved the closures of schools. By March 23, 2020, Governor Edwards issued a stay-at-home order and a closure until further notice for all non-essential business

including; restaurants, gyms, casinos, and bars. While these closures and extreme actions are warranted, the LA seafood industry was facing a situation that has never been encountered before, a nearly complete seafood market closure.

The LA commercial seafood sector, which has accumulated inventory to meet customer orders, began to notice the strain caused by the restaurant closures mainly due to the fact that a large portion of LA seafood goes to the restaurants. Reports of shipped seafood products being returned to the processors started in April and prices for some seafood products saw some of the lowest prices ever. Due to depressed prices, fishermen decided to not make fishing trips. Docks closed and would not buy seafood products from the fishermen, and seafood processors were unsure of what they could and couldn't purchase because of the high volume of inventoried product still in cold storage; this was a complete shutdown to nearly all seafood industries in LA.

The LA recreational for-hire (charter, headboat, and guideboat) fleet suffered nearly the same fate as the commercial seafood sector. The stay-at-home order issued in late March halted the majority of scheduled fishing trips. The public's concern with the spread of COVID-19 was very valid and this resulted in a large proportion of trip cancellations. In addition to the stay-at-home order, social distancing was explained as keeping a six-foot distance between yourself and the next person. Social distancing, although needed, limited the vessel capacity and number of possible for-hire trips per captain. The overall number of LA charter trips greatly decreased during the spring of 2020 due to the progress being made to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and this has caused economic hardship on the for-hire industry.

The Louisiana Spending Plan aims at providing financial assistance to the eligible participants through direct payments.

Approach:

The GSMFC will administer economic assistance to the eligible participants in eligible sectors in LA through direct payments based on the approved Louisiana Spending Plan. The sectors are as follows: commercial fishermen, commercial fishing vessel owners, fresh product licensees, charter captains, wholesale dealer docks, wholesale dealer brokers, wholesale dealer processors and qualified aquaculture operations. Based on information gathered during the original CARES Act Program, no federal tribes qualify in LA under this grant. With the exception of aquaculture operations, all sectors were further divided into either part-time or full-time sub-sectors so that full-time entities receive a larger payment than part-time entities. Louisiana's allocation of the \$255 million made available to fishery participants totals \$12,477,165. NOAA and the GSMFC have deducted their administrative costs totaling \$166,033, leaving the remaining total of \$12,311,132 for direct payments and LDWF administration. Of this amount, LDWF will utilize a maximum of 4% (\$498,015) for program administration to include program development, industry outreach and assistance, application processing, application review, and final payment determinations. The LDWF will hire a contractor to provide eligible entities with application and language assistance. The remaining \$11,813,117 will be allocated using the final payment ratios between sectors and full-time and part-time participants used in the original CARES Act program (Table 1). The payment amount for a part-time commercial fisherman will serve as the base line. As an example, a part-time vessel owner will receive a payment 1.3 times larger than a part-time commercial fisherman, and a full-time vessel owner will receive a payment 4.5 times larger than a part-time vessel owner. The payment amount for the part-time commercial fisherman was calculated using the actual number of eligible applicants in each sector so that individual payments maintain the appropriate ratios and the total of all payments equals the total amount available. The final payment amounts and the amount allocated to each sector will be determined by the total number of applicants in each sector and the payment ratios stated below. Preliminary calculations of sector allocations based on available eligibility information using trip ticket data and data from the original CARES Act program are described in Table 2.

Table 1. Final payment ratios used in the original CARES Act program. The payment calculated for a commercial fisherman serves as the baseline.

Sector	Payment Ratio	Full-time Multiplier
Commercial Fisherman	1x	4.5
Vessels	1.3x	4.5
Charter Captain	2.16x	4.5
Fresh Product Dealer	0.65x	4.5
Wholesale Dealer Brokers	0.96x	4.5
Wholesale Dealer Docks	2.50x	4.5
Wholesale Dealer Processor	4.87x	4.5
Aquaculture Facilities	3.44x	4.5

Table 2. Preliminary sector allocations based on available eligibility information. Sector allocations will change based on the number of applicants per sector to maintain the payment ratios described in Table 1.

Entity	# Potentially Eligible	Allocation Percentage	Allocation Amount
NOAA and GSMFC	N/A	N/A	\$166,033
LDWF	N/A	N/A	\$498,015
Commercial Fishermen	4,539	44.88%	\$5,302,259.41
Vessel Owners	3,551	41.87%	\$4,946,585.34
Charter Captains	250	4.69%	\$553,990.99
Fresh Product Dealers	342	1.76%	\$207,940.77
Wholesale Dealer Brokers	20	<1%	\$14,227.12
Wholesale Dealer Docks	462	5.41%	\$639,209.16
Wholesale Dealer Processor	40	1%	\$144,721.69
Aquaculture Facilities ⁽¹⁾	1	<1%	\$4,182.51
Total		100%	\$12,477,165

(1)Alternative oyster culture permit holders are only eligible under the applicable, fisherman, vessel, dealer, and processor sectors

Entities may qualify for more than one sector as long as they can show a loss greater than 35% in each sector. For example, commercial fishermen can also qualify as a vessel owner and a processor can also qualify as a dock if their processing facility lands seafood and purchases directly from commercial fishermen. Cage culture of oysters will not be considered eligible for the aquaculture sector. Entities participating in the cage culture of oysters will instead be eligible under the applicable fisherman, vessel, dealer, and processor sectors. The LDWF intends to implement a single-phase payout process with final payment amounts calculated on the actual number of applicants. Any estimated unused administrative funds at the time of final payment calculation will be added back to the amount available for payments.

Sector Input:

In developing the original CARES Act Louisiana Spending Plan, the LDWF and Louisiana Sea Grant actively sought public comment from eligible fishery sectors. No in-person meetings took place due to the COVID-19 restrictions. However, LDWF and Louisiana Sea Grant discussed spending plan options with representatives from at least 10 organizations or associations in an effort to gain industry input. This new plan replicates what was done originally with a few changes based on lessons learned and public input gathered during the first application process. Given the condensed timeline and the similarity between the old plan and the new one, no directed effort was made to take additional public comment

Eligibility Criteria:

Eligible entities will be determined by requirements outlined by NOAA and the CARES Act, as well as state requirements that document active participation in the fishing industry, and must participate in a marine fishery. Eligible entities under Section 12005 of the CARES Act are federally recognized tribes, persons, fishing communities, and aquaculture businesses that are not eligible for the USDA Emergency Assistance

for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program, processors or other marine fishery related businesses.

Fishery related businesses are limited to:

- Commercial fishing businesses, both captains and vessels
- Charter / For-hire businesses
- Qualified aquaculture operations - privately owned aquaculture businesses growing products in state or federal marine waters of the United States and the hatcheries that supply them
- Processors
- Dealers, both docks and wholesalers / brokers

Businesses further down the supply chain are not considered fisheries related businesses for the purposes of Section 12005 of the CARES act, such as vessel supplier and repair businesses, seafood retailers, restaurants, marinas, and bait and tackle operations.

Eligible entities must be a resident of the state in which they are applying for assistance and must be at least 18 years old. If an entity is a limited liability company, corporation, or partnership, the business must register and remain in good standing with the Louisiana Secretary of State. Eligible entities must have incurred a greater than 35% revenue loss when compared to their 5-year average revenue from 2015 through 2019 (described below). Entities who have been in business less than five years are still eligible. Average revenue will be calculated only from those years in which they were in business and had revenue. Entities who entered business for the first time in 2020 or had no revenue between 2015 and 2019 are not eligible. Eligible entities must possess a 2021 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.

35% Loss Documentation and Validation:

LDWF has determined that trip ticket landings data or business sales records beginning January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020 will be utilized to determine if a participant has met the greater than 35% loss of revenue requirement. The 12-month period is one of the primary changes requested by applicants of the original program. COVID-19 losses will be calculated by comparing the 5-year average revenue of 2015-2019 to 2020 revenue.

Eligible entities will be required to certify and attest to the following:

- Experienced a revenue loss greater than 35% when compared to their prior 5-year average. The certification will require the entity to provide an approximate 5-year average revenue and the 2020 revenue.
- The sum of all federal assistance received for COVID-19 related losses (including COVID-19 related unemployment), under CARES Act and this program, and any other traditional revenue, will not exceed their total average annual revenue from the previous five years .
- Documentation/records exist to support the losses claimed under this program and that these records will be maintained for a period of no less than 5 years from receipt of their final payment and make them available to the Office of the Inspector General or GSMFC auditors.

Eligible entities will be required to agree to a validation process allowing LDWF or its contractors to review business and financial records related to claims made in the application. Such records can include bank statements or ledgers, quarterly tax payments, sales records, payroll records, and accounting records. The LDWF will attempt to validate a minimum of 20% of all applications submitted by entities not required to report trip ticket data. All applications submitted by entities reporting trip ticket data will be validated against the LDWF trip ticket database.

Applicants found to have willfully falsified their loss and supporting documentation will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Qualifying Criteria by Sector:

The number of potentially eligible entities in each sector as well as the allocation per sector can be seen in Table 2. With the exception of the aquaculture and tribe sectors, each sector was further divided into part-time and full-time sub-sectors. Qualifying criteria for the full-time sub-sector varies by sector and will be described below.

Commercial Fishermen

As the second largest producer of commercial seafood by volume in the United States, the Louisiana commercial fishing sector is quite large. In order to appropriately estimate the number of fishermen that may be eligible to participate in this program, LDWF used 2020 trip ticket and licensing data. Eligible commercial fishermen are required to have documented trip ticket landings with LDWF in 2018 or 2019 and possess a resident 2021 commercial fishing license prior to applying. Commercial fishermen who possess a certified endorsement on either their 2019, 2020, or 2021 license qualify as a full-time participant.

In 2011, the LA Legislation promulgated a rule (RS 56:303 E) allowing the LDWF to create a certificate that shall endorse a commercial fishing license as “certified” upon presenting LDWF with a notarized statement from a certified tax preparer stating that at least fifty percent of the fisherman’s income is from commercial fishing activities. A fisherman may also become certified by applying for and receiving the certified tax exemption from the Louisiana Department of Revenue. The number of certified fishermen fluctuates each year because some fishermen, although qualified, forgo or forget to complete the annual certification form each year. As a result, LDWF intends to allow fishermen to complete the certification process during the application and approval process prior to receiving payment. Previous data shows the number of certified fishermen increase drastically around major disasters and LDWF is anticipating a large increase in association with this program.

Commercial Fishing Vessel Owners

For the same reasons stated above, the Louisiana commercial fishing vessel owner sector is also extensive. In order to appropriately estimate the number of vessel owners that may be eligible to participate in this program, LDWF used 2020 trip ticket data. Eligible vessels must be registered in Louisiana, have documented trip ticket landings with LDWF in 2018 or 2019 and possess a 2021 resident commercial fishing vessel license (if required by law) prior to applying. During the Louisiana CARES Act I application process, a large number of commercial fishermen who applied as a fisherman did not apply as a vessel owner even though they were eligible. In some cases, this was due to an error or omission on the applicant’s part. In order to maximize assistance to the industry, we will automatically add these vessels to the commercial fisherman’s application. We will only include eligible vessels with verified ownership that show a revenue loss greater than 35% according to LDWF trip ticket data. Commercial fishermen who qualify under both of these sectors will not receive payments that result in making them ‘more than whole’. Vessels that qualify as full-time are those whose 2018 and 2019 average landings by weight or trips taken exceeds 70 percent of the individual averages of all the other potentially eligible vessels harvesting similar species. LDWF will automatically make this determination based on available trip ticket data. Vessels with only one year of landings will not be penalized and the year in which they had landings will be used as their average. A vessel may also qualify as full-time if the vessel owner is also a certified fisherman. Table 3 defines the criteria used for determining the full-time status of vessels at the 70th percentile. There are no allocations by fishery in this program. Fishery was required as part of the analysis due to the differences in seasonality and product weight. We determined it would not be appropriate to compare landings and effort from one fishery to landings and effort from another. Data used to calculate the crab values were limited to crabs landed using traps and pots. Data used to calculate the saltwater finfish values were limited to those trips where at least 80% of the catch was finfish.

Table 3. Full-time minimum qualifying criteria for vessels by fishery based on the 70th percentile.

Sector	Fishery	Annual Trips (minimum #)		Annual Landings (minimum lbs)
Vessel Owners	Crab	80	OR	30,242
	Oyster	69		12,736
	Saltwater Fish	10		12,001
	Shrimp	18		34,185
	Combined	36		31,802

Vessels that harvest more than one species and do not qualify for the full-time sub-sector for any one individual species will have their landings combined and compared to the combined fishery in Table 3. This provides an alternative method to qualify for the full-time sub-sector.

Charter Captains

In order to appropriately estimate the number of charter captains that may be eligible to participate in this program, LDWF used 2018 and 2019 licensing data and application data from the original CARES Act program. Eligible charter captains are required to possess a resident 2021 LDWF charter captain license and have documented revenue in 2018 or 2019 prior to submitting an application. Documented revenue will be determined by using the tax return documentation described in the application process. Charter captains possessing a certified endorsement on either their 2019, 2020, or 2021 license qualify as the full-time participant.

Similar to the commercial fishermen, the for-hire participants are able to be classified as full time or a certified fisherman. A 2018 amendment to LA Legislation (RS 56:303 E) required the LDWF to create a certificate that shall endorse a charter captains license as “certified” upon presenting LDWF with a notarized statement from a certified tax preparer stating that at least fifty percent of the fisherman’s income is from commercial fishing activities. Unlike commercial fishermen, the Louisiana Department of Revenue option is not available. The charter captain certification is still relatively new and few captains obtain the certification because it lacks tax incentives. The ratio of certified vs. total charter captains who applied to the original program was used to estimate the number that would be eligible for this program.

Only licensed charter captains will be eligible under the charter sector. Charter businesses that operate multiple vessels and employ multiple captains are not eligible. These operations and their vessels are not licensed with LDWF and are unable to be identified.

Fresh Product Licensees

Fresh product licensees are commercial fishermen who are allowed to sell their own catch to the public. Anyone with a fresh product license is also required to possess a commercial fishermen’s license. In order to appropriately estimate the number of fresh product licensees that may be eligible to participate in this program, LDWF used 2018 and 2019 trip ticket and licensing data to determine the number of potentially eligible licensees. Eligible fresh product licensees must have documented trip ticket landings with LDWF in 2018 or 2019 and possess a resident 2021 fresh product license prior to applying. Fresh product licensees whose associated 2019, 2020, or 2021 commercial fishermen’s license is certified will qualify as full-time. LDWF has identified certified commercial fishermen that also possess a fresh product license. However, the number of certified fishermen fluctuates each year because some fishermen, although qualified, forgo or forget to complete the annual certification form each year. As a result, LDWF intends to allow fishermen to complete the certification process during the application and approval process prior to receiving payment. Past data shows the number of certified fishermen increase drastically around major disasters and LDWF is anticipating a large increase in association with this program.

Wholesale Dealer / Docks

Docks are facilities that land seafood and purchase it directly from the fishermen and are required to report trip tickets. In order to appropriately estimate the number of docks that may be eligible to participate in this program, LDWF used 2018 and 2019 trip ticket and licensing data to determine the number of potentially eligible docks. Eligible docks must have documented trip ticket landings with LDWF in 2018 or 2019 and possess a resident 2021 wholesale/retail dealer license prior to applying. Docks that qualify as full-time are those whose 2018 and 2019 average of landings by weight or trips landed exceeds 70 percent of all the other potentially eligible docks purchasing similar species. LDWF will automatically make this determination based on available trip ticket data. Docks with only one year of landings will not be penalized and the year in which they had landings will be used as their average. Table 4 defines the criteria used for determining the full-time status of docks at the 70th percentile. There are no allocations by fishery in this program. Fishery was required as part of the analysis due to the differences in seasonality and product weight. We determined it would not be appropriate to compare landings and effort from one fishery to landings and effort from another. Data used to calculate the crab values were limited to crabs landed using traps and pots. Data used to calculate the saltwater finfish values were limited to those trips where at least 80% of the catch was finfish.

Table 4. Full-time minimum qualifying criteria for docks by fishery based on the 70th percentile.

Sector	Fishery	Annual Trips (minimum #)		Annual Landings (minimum lbs)
Wholesale Dealer / Docks	Crab	125	OR	34,307
	Oyster	480		76,067
	Saltwater Fish	50		87,572
	Shrimp	82		53,924
	Combined	207		97,161

Docks that harvest more than once species and do not qualify for the full-time sub-sector for any one individual species will have their landings combined and compared to the combined fishery in Table 4. This provides an alternative method to qualify for the full-time sub-sector.

Wholesale Dealer / Brokers

Brokers are entities that possess a wholesale/retail dealer license and buy and resell seafood to other wholesale or retail dealers. While all wholesale dealers buy and resell seafood, brokers do not land seafood and purchase it directly from fishermen, nor do they process the seafood they purchase. As a result, entities qualifying as a broker, are not eligible to qualify as a dock or processor. In order to appropriately estimate the number of brokers that may be eligible to participate in this program, LDWF used 2018 and 2019 licensing data. Any entity possessing a wholesale/retail dealer license that was not also identified as a dock or processor was identified as a potential broker. Eligible brokers must possess a resident 2021 wholesale/retail dealer license and have documented revenue in 2018 or 2019 prior to submitting an application. Documented revenue will be determined by using the tax return documentation described in the application process. Brokers that qualify as full-time are those whose five year average of gross receipts and sales from 2015-2019 exceeds 50 percent of all the other brokers with eligible applications. LDWF will automatically make this determination based on tax documentation submitted with the application. Gross receipts and sales will be determined using line 1 or 1a on tax return forms 1040 / Schedule C, Form 1120, Form 1120-S, or Form 1065. The forms needed are dependent upon how the business is classified. Brokers with less than five years of landings will not be penalized and the years available will be used to calculate their average.

Wholesale Dealer / Processors

Processors are entities that possess a wholesale/retail dealer license and a permit from the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) to process seafood. In order to appropriately estimate the number of processors that may be eligible to participate in this program, LDWF used 2018 and 2019 licensing data as well as permit data provided by LDH. The list was further vetted by industry outreach by the LDWF and LA Sea Grant and through direct communication with LDH, who does inspections on these facilities. The list was then narrowed down to the seafood processors that are known to be active in the industry. Eligible

processors must possess a resident 2021 wholesale/retail dealer license, an active LDH processing permit for oysters, crabs, shrimp, or finfish, and have documented revenue in 2018 or 2019 prior to submitting an application. Documented revenue will be determined by using the tax return documentation described in the application process. Processors that qualify as full-time are those whose five year average of gross receipts and sales from 2015-2019 exceeds 50 percent of all the other processors with eligible applications. LDWF will automatically make this determination based on tax documentation submitted with the application. Gross receipts and sales will be determined using line 1 or 1a on tax return forms 1040 / Schedule C, Form 1120, Form 1120-S, or Form 1065. The forms needed are dependent upon how the business is classified. Processors with less than five years of landings will not be penalized and the years available will be used to calculate their average.

Federally Recognized Tribes

LDWF has determined that there are currently four federally recognized tribal communities in LA. Of those four, only two are near the coastal zone. LDWF has contacted each tribal community to determine if they would qualify for this project and each of them has stated that they have not experienced negative impacts to subsistence, cultural, or ceremonial marine fisheries. Based on this, the fact no federally recognized Tribes applied for funding in round 1, and that federally recognized Tribes have been allocated funds under a separate grant, LDWF has decided to allocate no funding for tribes.

Qualified Aquaculture Operations

Qualifying aquaculture operations are those operations that are privately owned and growing products in state or federal marine waters of the United States and the hatcheries that supply them. Entities participating in the cage culture of oysters will not be considered eligible under the aquaculture sector and will instead be eligible under the applicable fisherman, vessel, dealer, and processor sectors. As a result, aquaculture operations that qualify for this program are anticipated to be very low. Eligible aquaculture operations must be domiciled in Louisiana, possess the necessary licenses and permits, and have documented revenue in 2018 or 2019 prior to submitting an application. Documented revenue will be determined by using the tax return documentation described in the application process. Sub-sector allocations and criteria will not be utilized for tribes.

Funding Distribution:

Given the eligibility criteria, LDWF is unable to identify and pre-qualify every eligible entity. LDWF has decided to eliminate the two-phase payment method utilized in the original program. Therefore, LDWF intends to provide estimated payment amounts (Table 5) during the application process that are based on the potential number of applicants identified in Table 2. This system ensures the program does not run out of funding and all eligible entities receive assistance. Final payment amounts will be calculated using the actual number of eligible applicants in each sector so that individual payments maintain the appropriate ratios described in Table 1 and the total of all payments equals the total amount available.

Table 5. **Estimated** payment amounts by sector and sub-sector. Final payment amounts will be calculated using the actual number of eligible applicants in each sector so that individual payments maintain the appropriate ratios described in Table 1 and the total of all payments equals the total amount available.

Entity	# Potentially Eligible	Part-time Payment	Full-time Payment
Commercial Fishermen	4,539	\$270.75	\$1,215.42
Vessel Owners	3,551	\$350.47	\$1,577.13
Charter Captains	250	\$583.15	\$2,624.17
Fresh Product Dealers	342	\$176.45	\$794.00
Wholesale Dealer Brokers	20	\$258.67	\$1,164.04
Wholesale Dealer Docks	462	\$673.92	\$3,032.62
Wholesale Dealer Processor	40	\$1,315.65	\$5,920.43
Aquaculture Facilities ⁽¹⁾	1	NA	\$4,182.51

Application Process:

The application process will be conducted electronically and is scheduled to open on July 1, 2021, should LDWF receive NOAA approval. The application process will be open for a six-week period. The individual named on the license or a registered agent of the named business must complete the application. Business applicants must also be currently registered with the Louisiana Secretary of State. Potential applicants will be notified prior to the opening of the application portal of the required documentation. Applicants are required to submit the following documents:

- Copy of photo id
- The last 5 years (2015-2019) of tax return forms. Form 1040 / Schedule C, Form 1120, Form 1120-S, or Form 1065 will be required. Additional forms, tax receipts, revenue records, etc. may be needed during the application process.
 - Applicants who entered the fishery less than 5 years ago or applicants who have not yet filed taxes in certain years will be allowed to indicate such on the application.
 - Applicants who reside in Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, St. Mary, or Vermillion parishes will be allowed to forgo submitting their tax information due to the impacts of Hurricanes Laura and Delta.
 - Applicants who already submitted their tax documentation during the original application process will not be required to re-submit.
- For applicants not required to have a LDWF license or permit, proof that the business is active in 2021 is necessary. Examples of acceptable documentation include, but are not limited to, municipal permits, occupational licenses, quarterly tax payment records, sales or financial reports, and payroll reports.
- For applicants not required to submit LDWF trip tickets, proof of business activity in 2018 or 2019 is necessary. Examples of acceptable documentation include, but are not limited to, municipal permits, sales or financial reports, and payroll reports.
 - Applicants who already submitted their proof of business documentation during the original application process will not be required to re-submit.
- W-9 Form
- New certified fisherman / charter captain forms
 - May be submitted after the application is submitted
 - Applicants who already submitted their certified documentation during the original application process will not be required to re-submit.

Applicants qualifying for any combination of the commercial fishermen, vessel owner, and fresh product license sectors may submit one application. If a partnership, corporation, or limited liability company owns the vessel, a separate application must be submitted for that vessel. Applicants owning more than one vessel may submit one application for all vessels provided they are owned by and registered with the same legal entity (SSN or tax identification number (TIN)). Docks and processors may combine different locations on a single application provided they are owned by and licensed under the same legal entity (SSN or TIN). Charter captains, brokers, and aquaculture facilities sector applications cannot be combined with any other sector and must submit separate applications.

LDWF intends to provide language and application assistance via a contractor. Assistance will be provided over the phone, video conference, or in person as time and capacity allow. Those without internet access will be assisted in person at the contractor's office or directed to the nearest public library.

Expected Benefits:

Direct payments utilizing CARES Act funding are expected to provide some economic relief to those members of the fishing industry that have suffered losses due to COVID-19.

Schedule: The below schedule is tentative and dependent upon receiving plan approval.

July 1, 2021 – Application period opens

August 12, 2021 – Application period closes

September 30, 2021 – Completion of application review process and issuance of payments

Budget:

LDWF will contract with South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) for a period of three months for a total of \$88,239. SCPDC will assist LDWF with the following:

- Advertising the program
- Act as a first point of contact for applicants
- Assist applicants with the application process either via telephone, video chat, or in person when necessary
- Provide Spanish and Vietnamese interpreters in person or via the telephone
- Hold up to five in person town hall meetings to cover program details and assist with applications
- Assist LDWF staff with reviewing financial documentation during the application and verification process

LDWF estimates that each assigned staff member can process and approve a minimum of two applications per hour at a cost of \$19.08 per application. LDWF anticipates receiving 9,200 applications for a total of 4,600 man hours and \$175,536. LDWF will set aside an amount equal to \$159,240 as a contingency to cover the cost of additional applications or increases in processing time.

LDWF will attempt to validate a minimum of 20% of all applications submitted by entities not required to report trip ticket data. An estimated 20 applications which will be validated during the application review process.

LDWF intends to utilize existing staff and equipment to process and review applications. There will be no additional supplies or equipment needed outside of those in third party contracts. Any estimated unused administrative funds, excluding those needed to conduct loss and income validation, will be made available for inclusion in the final payment calculation.

Table 6. LDWF CARES Act Budget.

Description	Duration	Budget
Program development	10 weeks	\$75,000
SCPDC contract	3 months	\$88,239.00
Application processing	4,600 man hours	\$175,536.00
Application processing contingency		\$159,240.00
Administrative Subtotal	\$498,015	
Commercial Fishermen and Aquaculture		\$10,460,968.03
Seafood Processors and Dealers		\$798,157.97
For-Hire Operations		\$553,991.00
Tribal Communities		\$0.00
Direct Payments Subtotal	\$11,813,117.00	
Total		\$12,311,132.00

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