



LDWF Equipment Modernization Grant Program – Frequently Asked Questions

Understanding the Basics

1. What is the Equipment Modernization Grant Program?

The Equipment Modernization Grant is designed to revitalize the commercial fishing industry within the State of Louisiana by providing updated and modern equipment to commercial fishermen, vessel owners, seafood docks, processors and charter captains. The objective of this grant program is to increase the profitability, sustainability, and adaptability of Louisiana's commercial fishing industry. Equipment meeting this objective could be a valuable resource in long-term recovery and resiliency of Louisiana's fishing industry.

Participants in this grant program may be reimbursed up to \$30,000 for eligible expenses. Eligible expenses are any expenses related to the commercial fishing industry such as equipment and repairs that meet one of the equipment goals outlined in the Spend Plan submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Spend Plan is located at:

https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Fishing/Commercial_Fishing/Files/LA-Flood-Disaster-Spend-Plan.pdf. Eligible expenses also include activities directed at helping the commercial fishing industry adapt to the changing coast in Louisiana. Such expenses include equipment upgrades that allow for increased travel times and distances, expenses associated with new fishing methods or entering an entirely new fishery, as well as elevation of equipment and facilities.

2. Is there any cost to me associated with the grant?

No. This is a reimbursement grant program. There is no cost to participate. This Program will never ask an applicant or business applying for a grant for their credit card or bank account information.

3. Where did the funding come from?

Based on days at or above flood stage at Baton Rouge, LA, the 2018-2019 Mississippi River flood is the longest lasting flood on record since 1900 (when records became available), surpassing the flood of 1927 in duration, resulting in a federal fisheries disaster declaration.

Louisiana received \$23.95 million in funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the Equipment Modernization Grant Program as result of this declaration.

4. How can I apply?

Applications can be submitted beginning on Tuesday, December 5, 2023, at 9:00 AM CST. Those wishing to apply can register and complete their Applicant Profile at: <https://ldwffisheries-grants.intelligrants.com> to expedite their application process when the application does become available. For more information on the Program and what is required to apply, please visit the LDWF Program website located at: <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/equipment-grant-2023>.

5. What is the application deadline?

The application process will remain open until the number of applications received is expected to exhaust the available funding. Applications will be reviewed on a first come, first served basis until all Program funds are exhausted. Applications will be reviewed by the Program in the order in which they are submitted. As such, the Program encourages those that wish to apply to do so as soon as possible.

6. Who can I contact for questions regarding the application and subsequent process?

Please reach out to South Central Planning Development at 800-630-3791. The following office locations are open to assist Applicants who wish to schedule an in-person appointment.

Location	Hours
<p style="text-align: center;">Houma 5058 West Main Street Houma, LA 70360</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Abbeville Pere Megret Building 404 Pere Megret Street Abbeville, LA 70511</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.</p>

7. Are paper applications being accepted?

No, all applications must be submitted through the online application portal. If you require additional assistance in completing your online application, please contact South Central Planning & Development at 800-630-3791 to schedule an in-person appointment.

South Central Planning & Development office locations and hours of operation open for applicant assistance are provided below:

Location	Hours
<p style="text-align: center;">Houma 5058 West Main Street Houma, LA 70360</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Abbeville Pere Megret Building 404 Pere Megret Street Abbeville, LA 70511</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.</p>

Before contacting or visiting South Central Planning & Development for application assistance, please gather required documentation. For a complete list on required documentation, please visit the LDWF Program website at the following link: <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/equipment-grant-2023>.

8. What are the eligibility requirements?

The program is open to all Louisiana resident docks, processing facilities, commercial fishing vessel owners, commercial fishermen, and charter captains 18 years of age or older that meet the eligibility criteria listed below and were engaged in a saltwater fishery impacted by the freshwater flooding event. If an applicant is a limited liability company, corporation, or partnership, the business must be registered and in good standing with the Louisiana Secretary of State.

- Applicants must possess a resident LDWF commercial fisherman’s license, vessel license, charter captain’s license, or wholesale retail dealer license, in the current year or the most recent season (if in a seasonal fishery).
 - Only one application per license / vessel / facility is allowed.
 - Only one application per license account number / tax ID number is allowed.
- Commercial fishermen and charter captains must have a certified endorsement on their license or be able to prove at least 50% or more of their income comes from saltwater commercial fishing or charter activity.
- The certified endorsement or 50% income requirement must be from at least one of the years 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021.
- Docks or processing facilities must be located in Louisiana to be eligible for this grant.
- Applicants must be an active saltwater fishery participant in the current year or the most recent season (if in a seasonal fishery).
- Applicants must have reported saltwater seafood sales on LDWF trip tickets in an impacted fishery in 2018 or 2019 AND 2020 or 2021.

- If the applicant is not legally required to submit trip tickets, the applicant must show proof of business activity in required years using such records as bank statements or ledgers, quarterly tax payments, sales records, payroll records, tax records, and accounting records. If applying as a charter captain, the applicant may provide copies of the completed and notarized certified charter boat fishing guide forms as proof of business activity.
- Applicants who entered the fishery for the first time after 2019 are not eligible. Applicants who left the fishery after 2019 and did not return are not eligible.

9. How will I receive my funds?

If you are determined eligible for the Program, a check will be mailed to the Mailing Address on file; therefore, Applicants should ensure they are actively receiving mail at the Mailing Address provided on the application. If Applicants need to update the Mailing Address on file, please reach out to South Central Planning Development at 800-630-3791. The following office locations are also open to assist Applicants who wish to schedule an in-person appointment.

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<p style="text-align: center;">Abbeville Pere Megret Building 404 Pere Megret Street Abbeville, LA 70511</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.</p>

10. Do I have to repay these funds?

No, the LDWF Equipment Modernization Program is a grant program, and therefore, funds do not need to be repaid.

However, in the event the Program or its auditors determines any information contained within the application was false, fraudulent, or materially misleading, the applicant will be obligated to repay some or all funds received under the Program.

11. Are grants received from the Program taxable?

Funds received from this program are legally required to be reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) using a 1099. All applicants should consult with their tax advisor concerning any tax liabilities from funds received from this Program.

Program Eligibility Questions

1. What are the eligibility requirements for eligible equipment purchases under the Program?

- Equipment must be purchased on or after September 1, 2019
- Equipment must meet one of the eligible categories / purposes:
 - Increases harvesting or processing efficiency
 - Increases fuel efficiency
 - Increases product quality and marketability
 - Increases access to restricted / more regulated higher value markets
 - Decreases environmental impacts
 - Decreases maintenance and overhead burden
 - Adapts to changing coastline and environmental impacts
 - Allows for increased travel times and distances
 - Expenses for New Fishing Methods or Entering New Fishery
 - Elevation of Equipment and Facilities
- Equipment must be new or factory or manufacturer refurbished at time of purchase – cannot be secondhand or used

Reimbursement for labor costs associated with professional installation of equipment is limited to 15% of the total cost of all equipment, not to exceed \$4,500.

2. What documentation is required for equipment reimbursement to be deemed eligible?

If the applicant is seeking reimbursement for previously purchased equipment, the applicant will be required to provide valid and legible receipts for the piece of equipment dated on or after September 1, 2019. Receipts dated prior to this date are not eligible under the Program.

For applicants seeking to purchase new equipment, the applicant will be required to submit quotes for the piece of equipment. All submitted quotes should be dated within the last three (3) months preceding the application submission.

All receipts and quotes (including those that are handwritten) must be original copies on vendor letterhead.

Receipts and quotes should be highlighted indicating the items for which the applicant is requesting reimbursement.

Please note: All equipment must be new or factory or manufacturer refurbished at the time of purchase. Purchases of used or preowned equipment are not eligible under the Program. Refurbished equipment

should be identified by the manufacturer or vendor as refurbished within the supporting receipt/quote documentation.

3. Which LDWF Commercial Licenses are eligible for the Program?

Applicants must possess one (1) of the following LDWF Resident Commercial Licenses:

- Louisiana Resident Commercial Fisherman License
- Louisiana Resident Charter Boat Guide License
- Louisiana Resident Commercial Vessel License
- Louisiana Commercial Wholesale / Retail Dealer License (if applying as a dock, or processing facility)
 - Dock or Processing Facility must be located in Louisiana

4. Which fisheries are eligible for the Program?

To be eligible for the Program, the Applicant or Applicant Business must have been engaged in a fishery that was impacted by the 2019 Louisiana freshwater flooding event. The following impacted fisheries have been identified by the Program:

- Shrimp
- Crab
- Oysters
- Saltwater Finfish
 - For Commercial Fishermen, Vessel Owners, and Wholesale / Retail Dealers, only the following Saltwater Finish are eligible for the Program:
 - Black Drum
 - Menhaden

Freshwater Finfish and Crawfish, including Pond or Farm Raised, are not eligible for this program.

Other Application & Documentation Questions

1. What documents and information may be necessary to process my application?

The following documents and information are required to process your application:

- Copy of current government-issued photo ID (for the person authorized to complete and submit application)
- Copy of Louisiana Resident Commercial Fisherman License (If applying as a commercial fisherman) for the current year or most recent season (if in a seasonal fishery)

- Copy of Louisiana Resident Charter Boat Guide License (If applying as a charter captain) for the current year or most recent season (if in a seasonal fishery)
- Copy of LDWF Certified Commercial/Charter Form for one of the qualifying income years 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021 will be required during the application review process if commercial fisherman/charter captain's certification cannot be verified in the LDWF Commercial Licensing database
 - The Certified Commercial Fisherman and Certified Charter Form is a LDWF Commercial Licensing form that is used to verify that at least 50% or more of your income comes from the commercial or charter fishing activity. A registered tax preparer must complete the certified form and the form must be notarized. Once LDWF Commercial Licensing receives the original notarized certified form, the certified endorsement will be added in the LDWF Commercial Licensing database.
 - If the Applicant submitted the original certified fisherman/charter form to LDWF Commercial Licensing for one of the qualifying income years 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021, the Applicant **will not** have to provide a copy of the LDWF certified form during the application review process.
 - Commercial Fisherman/Charter Captains who **cannot** be verified in the LDWF Commercial Licensing database for one of the qualifying income years (2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021) will receive a notification during the application review process with a deadline to submit a copy of the completed and notarized certified form. For Commercial Fishermen and Charter Captains who **do not** have a registered tax preparer, LDWF recommends waiting for Program notification before engaging a registered tax preparer to complete the certified form.
 - Commercial Fishermen/Charter Captains must enter the correct tax year (2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021) on the certified form to be eligible. The original notarized certified form must be mailed to the address on the form for the certified endorsement to be added in the LDWF Commercial Licensing database. The certified forms can be located on <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/equipment-grant-2023>
- Copy of Louisiana Resident Commercial Vessel License (If applying as a vessel owner) for the current year or most recent season (if in a seasonal fishery)
- Copy of vessel registration that corresponds to vessel license (If applying as a vessel owner) for the current year or most recent season (if in a seasonal fishery)
- Copy of Louisiana Commercial Wholesale/Retail Dealer License (If applying as a dock or processing facility) for the current year or most recent season (if in a seasonal fishery)
- Board Resolution Form is needed if your business is registered as a Corporation, Limited Liability Company (LLC), or Partnership to authorize an individual to act on behalf of the business.
- If the Applicant Business is a sole proprietorship and the Applicant is not the individual linked to the LDWF commercial license, for which the application has been submitted, the Applicant will be required to submit an Authorized Representative Form signed by the LDWF Commercial Licensee authorizing the Applicant to submit the grant application on behalf of the Business or LDWF Commercial Licensee.
- W-9 Form that corresponds with the Taxpayer Identification Number (SSN / FEIN) associated with the LDWF Commercial License for which you are applying under.

- Proof of Business Activity Documentation (if applicant is not required to submit LDWF trip tickets)
 - Applicants who are not required to submit trip tickets will be required to submit proof of business activity documentation in 2018 or 2019 and in 2020 or 2021 during the application review process. Proof of business activity documentation for the qualifying income years may include bank statements or ledgers, quarterly tax payments, sales records, payroll records, tax records, accounting records, or LDWF Certified Forms (Charter Captains). Applicants must provide proof of business activity documentation by the deadline date to be eligible.
- Receipts and/or quotes
 - If applicant is seeking reimbursement for previously purchased equipment, applicant must submit receipts dated on or after September 1, 2019; receipts dated prior to this date are not eligible for reimbursement.
 - Applicants seeking to purchase new equipment must submit quotes.
 - Receipts and quotes (including handwritten) must be on vendor letterhead, original, itemized, dated and legible.
 - Receipts and quotes should be highlighted indicating those items for which applicant is requesting reimbursement.
 - All equipment must be new or factory or manufacturer refurbished at the time of purchase. Purchases of used or preowned equipment are not eligible under the Program.

2. Can I upload more than one document to support my expenses?

Yes, document upload fields on the application form will allow for more than one document to be uploaded.

Please ensure all documentation required to support your equipment expenses is uploaded before submitting your application.

3. How can I upload documents after my application has been submitted?

If additional documentation is required after application submission, the Program will reach out to you via email or phone using the Contact Information provided on your application to assist you in providing any additional necessary documentation.

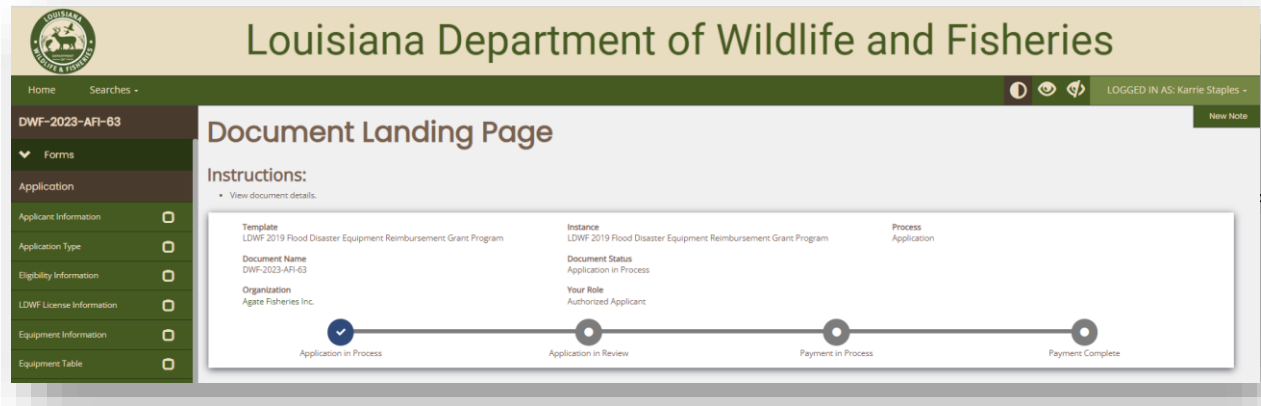
4. Is there a way to have my documentation reviewed to see if it is sufficient?

Documentation will be reviewed by the Program along with your application following submission. If you have any questions on documentation requirements prior to application submission, please contact South Central Planning Development at 800-630-3791 or visit the following office locations:

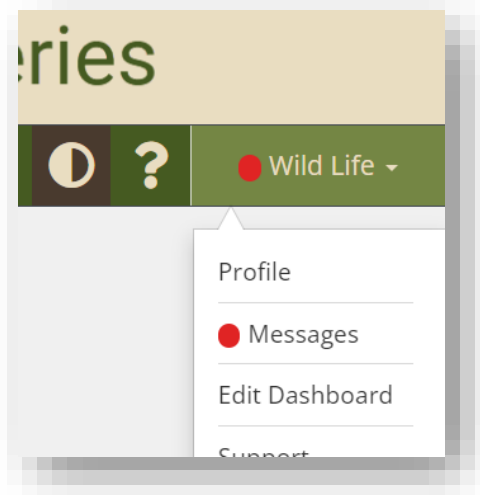
Location	Hours
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5. Can I monitor the status of my application?

Yes, applicants will be able to view the current status of their application within the LDWF Grant Portal by opening their current application and viewing the Document Landing Page (screenshot below).



To check system messages, Applicants can click on their name in the top right corner, then select "Messages." A red dot will be displayed next to the "Messages" field if there are new unread messages (see screenshot below).



6. How will I be notified that I have been awarded a grant?

If an Applicant is determined eligible for a Grant Award under the Program, the Program will issue a formal Grant Award Notice outlining the approved Final Grant Award amount. Applicants will be notified via email once a Grant Award Notice is issued and prompted to login to the LDWF Grant Portal to view their Grant Award Notice.

7. How do I accept my Grant Award?

Following the issuance of a Grant Award Notice by the Program, applicants will have a period of 14 calendar days to login to their LDWF Grant Portal, view the Grant Award Notice and accept their award by clicking the “**Accept Award**” button within the LDWF Grant Portal.

At the expiration of the 14-calendar day window, if an applicant has not accepted or requested an appeal of their grant award, the applicant will waive any appeal rights, and the grant award will automatically be accepted and moved towards payment.

8. Can I appeal a decision?

Applicants may appeal certain Program decisions, including a determination of Ineligibility based on outlined eligibility criteria of the Program or a Grant Award Determination.

Following a formal Program determination, a Notice will be issued on your application within the LDWF Grant Portal. Applicants will have a period of 14 calendar days following Program Notice to initiate an appeal by clicking the “**Initiate Appeal**” button within the LDWF Grant Portal. Applicants who wish to appeal a determination will be required to complete and submit an appeal request, including a justification for the appeal and uploading any supporting documentation for the appeal request.

The Program will review submitted appeal requests and provide an updated Program determination to the Applicant within the LDWF Grant Portal.

Equipment Reimbursement Questions

1. Is the Equipment reimbursed by the Program subject to an on-site inspection?

Yes, the Program reserves the right to an on-site inspection of all equipment that was purchased and installed using funds from the Equipment Modernization Grant. If the applicant is selected for an on-site inspection, the applicant will be notified by the Program and have a period of 60 days to schedule an inspection date.

If the applicant fails the first inspection, the applicant will be notified by letter and given a deadline to rectify deficiencies, and equipment will be re-inspected. If the applicant fails the re-inspection, applicant will be notified by letter of ineligibility.

2. How do I determine if myself or my business is required to submit trip tickets to LDWF?

A trip ticket must be filled out by the dealer when a commercial fisherman transfers his catch to a Wholesale/Retail Dealer or when a Fresh Products licensee (commercial fishermen licensed to sell their catch directly to consumers) sells his catch to the general public.

For more information regarding trip tickets, please see the following link:

<https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/trip-tickets>.

3. Do I have to submit copies of my trip tickets with my application?

Applicants are not required to submit copies of their trip tickets for 2018 or 2019 and in 2020 or 2021 with the application. LDWF can verify trip ticket records to determine Applicant's eligibility.

If an Applicant is ineligible according to LDWF's trip ticket records, the Applicant will receive an ineligible notification via the online portal. Applicants can appeal the ineligible decision by providing proof of eligibility.

Trip ticket records may be useful in determining discrepancies in trip tickets submitted to LDWF by a dealer. Applicants can complete a trip ticket data request form to obtain copies of trip ticket records. To receive a summary of submitted trip ticket data, please visit <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/trip-tickets> to download a copy of the request form.

If an Applicant determines a dealer may not have submitted qualifying trip tickets to LDWF based on the trip ticket records, the Applicant may contact the dealer for the qualifying trip tickets. Applicants can upload the additional qualifying trip tickets from the dealer as proof of eligibility into the online portal.

4. Can I apply for equipment that has not yet been purchased? If so, what information is required to request approval to purchase new equipment?

Yes, Applicants may apply for equipment that has not yet been purchased.

For applicants seeking approval to purchase new equipment, the applicant will be required to submit quotes for the piece of equipment. All quotes (including those that are handwritten) must be original copies on vendor letterhead and all submitted quotes should be dated within the last three (3) months preceding the application submission.

Quotes should be **highlighted** indicating the items for which the applicant is requesting reimbursement.

Please note: All equipment must be new or factory or manufacturer refurbished at the time of purchase. Purchases of used or preowned equipment are not eligible under the Program.

5. Will I be reimbursed if I purchase equipment from a different vendor than the vendor on approved quotes?

The Applicant must submit a valid reason (e.g. vendor's operation closed, equipment is back ordered, equipment is no longer available, etc.) if the Applicant purchases equipment from a different vendor. For equipment to be considered, the equipment type on the approved quote must at least be the same as the equipment purchased from the new vendor.

6. Will I be reimbursed if the equipment amount on my receipts varies from the amount on the approved quotes?

As long as the equipment purchased is close to the amount stated on the quotes, the Program will honor the price difference.

Each awarded Applicant is guaranteed up to \$30,000. If an Applicant was approved for receipts less than \$30,000, and the Applicant accepts the award amount or the appeal award amount deadline expired, the Applicant forfeits any additional reimbursement.

7. How long will I have to purchase new equipment following Program approval to purchase?

Applicants will have a period of 120 calendar days from Program approval to purchase new equipment.

8. If my application contains previous equipment purchases and a request for new equipment purchases, am I eligible to receive a grant award for my previous equipment purchases in advance of completing purchase of new equipment?

No, in the event an application is approved for reimbursement of prior equipment purchases and new equipment purchases, grant award payment will be held until all equipment purchases have been reviewed and approved by the Program.

9. If I sold my vessel and purchased a new vessel, will my new vessel qualify for this program?

If the vessel owner had saltwater trip ticket landings on the previous vessel in 2018 or 2019 and in 2020 or 2021, the vessel owner may qualify for equipment on the current vessel. The previous vessel and current vessel must be the same vessel owner as stated with LDWF Commercial Licensing. If the vessel owner had a previous vessel under a different name and or tax id # from the current vessel, the vessel owner may be required to show proof of vessel ownership.