

# Consolidated Appropriations Act -- Fisheries Assistance Program

RIDEM  
April 28, 2021

# Introduction

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- In December 2020, Congress enacted the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.
- The Act includes \$300 million in funding for COVID-related fisheries assistance, \$255 million of which is allocated for fisheries assistance in the coastal states.
- NOAA Fisheries announced the allocation of the \$255 million among the coastal states on March 29, 2021.

# Introduction

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- RI's allocation will be approximately \$2.9 million
  - This is the adjusted amount that accounts for NOAA's and ASMFC's administrative costs for the allocation and distribution of the funding to the states
- RI will receive its state share from the ASMFC
  - RIDEM will also likely use a small portion for administrative costs, final numbers still being determined.

# Use of the Funds

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- Funding intended to address the same core issue as the 2020 CARES Act -- provide assistance to eligible fishery participants to address direct and indirect COVID-19 impacts.
- NOAA has issued preliminary guidance pertaining to the new funds. Final guidance remains pending.
- Per the Act and NOAA's preliminary guidance, the framework for the second round of funding will closely follow and be consistent with the first round.

# Basis for the Allocation

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- NOAA Fisheries used readily available total annual revenue information from the commercial fishing, charter fishing, aquaculture, and processor/seafood sectors of coastal states and territories to proportionately allocate the 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act funding (similar to CARES Act).
- RI's allocation is not required to be distributed based on these proportions. Eligible participants may vary based on the core requirement that participants must have incurred an economic revenue loss greater than 35%.

# Use of Funds

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- Assistance may include direct payments, fishery-related infrastructure, and fishery-related education.
- Fishery-related infrastructure and education could include a wide variety of topics (e.g., seafood marketing, repairs or improvements to fish distribution and storage based on mitigating COVID impacts.)

# Use of the Funds

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- Eligible participants for direct payments:
  - Commercial fishermen
  - For-hire businesses
  - Privately owned aquaculture operations
  - Processors
  - Subsistence, cultural, and ceremonial users
  - Other fishery-related businesses
    - Marine bait and tackle operations, marine gear and vessel suppliers
    - **Not** businesses farther down the supply chain (e.g. vessel repair businesses, restaurants, or seafood retailers)

# Eligibility

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- Eligible fishery participants must have incurred a documented fishery-related loss in revenue during reference period, greater than 35% relative to average fishery-related revenues earned during the same reference period over the prior 5 years (2015-2019), or active portion thereof if fishery-related revenues did not encompass the entire 5-year period.
- Applicants cannot seek funds that would make them "more than whole" in 2020 relative to their average annual revenue earned across the previous five years (2015-2019).



# Process

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- Federal guidance has been that fewer deviations where possible from the previous CARES Act Spend Plan will result in expedient turnaround times on spend plan reviews.
- As such, RIDEM initial plans will be conduct similar processes:
  - Develop and submit spend plan to NOAA.
  - Regulation language and filing.
  - Application process and opening/closing periods.
  - Anticipating two meetings: this initial meeting to introduce the renewed funding and implement feedback on select items.

# Primary Feedback Requested

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- The two items we need feedback for this round of funding are
  - (1) Sector Allocations
    - Should sector allocations be updated either based on the different fisheries operating in a new impact period or based on results from the last relief funding.
  - (2) Impact Period
    - Last round, we used a March-May as the impact period. We are seeking input on reference periods for this program.

# (1) Sector Allocation vs. Claim

**How did CARES Act initial allocations compare to claim amounts?**

Fishing Sector	CARES Act Round 1 – Initial Allocation		CARES Act Round 1 – Claims Amount	
	Allocation (%)	Allocation (\$)	Allocation (%)	Allocation (\$)
Commercial Fishing	62.6%	\$1,983,120	11.17%	\$1,900,266
Aquaculture	5.4%	\$171,068	2.29%	\$389,734
Party and Charter	3.5%	\$110,877	0.43%	\$72,404
Processors	28.5%	\$902,858	86.11%	\$14,646,226

# (1) Sector Allocations vs. Disbursed

**How did CARES Act initial allocations compare to final funds disbursed?**

Fishing Sector	CARES Act Round 1 – Initial Allocation		CARES Act Round 1 – Final Funds Disbursed	
	Allocation (%)	Allocation (\$)	Allocation (%)	Allocation (\$)
Commercial Fishing	62.6%	\$1,983,120	60.0%	\$1,900,266
Aquaculture	5.4%	\$171,068	6.0%	\$190,394
Party and Charter	3.5%	\$110,877	2.3%	\$72,404
Processors	28.5%	\$902,858	31.7%	\$1,004,859

## (2) Impact Period

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- Reference period for the CARES Act was March 1-May 31, 2020.
- Initial recommendation from RIDEM would be June 1 to December 31, 2020.
- However, if there were still unclaimed losses from the reference period of the CARES Act, the previous period could be included again in this round's reference period
  - Reference periods could also vary by sector
  - e.g. impact periods for commercial fishing, seafood processing, party and charter, and aquaculture could be different.

# Moving Forward

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- RIDEM will use feedback from stakeholders to inform a draft spend plan.
- At least one more workshop will be conducted to present proposed spend plan details, particularly where they vary from last time.
- Relevant links:
  - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/funding-and-financial-services/additional-assistance-funding-under-consolidated>
  - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/secretary-commerce-announces-allocation-additional-255-million-cares-act-funding>
- Presentations and relevant material will be placed on the RIDEM Division of Marine Fisheries website.