



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Applications for Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block Grant to be Accepted Beginning July 1

JACKSON, Miss. – Partnering with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) will begin accepting applications from eligible participants of the Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block Grant Program beginning July 1, 2022. This program, funded by the Pandemic Assistance provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, will assist in defraying the expenses of preparing for, preventing exposure to and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for seafood processing facilities and processing vessels.

The MDMR and MDAC will determine funding amounts based on industry needs and amount of funds available. Funds can cover activities associated with the following:

- Workplace safety measures, including, but not limited to, personal protective equipment, sanitizer, hand washing stations, air filters, thermometers, cleaning supplies or similar items.
- Market pivots, such as the transition to virtual/online sales costs (online platform development and fees, online marketing, credit card processing fees), supplies, new signage.
- Retrofitting facilities for worker and consumer safety (retrofitting harvester vessels for onboard vessel processing to maximize open-air activities, plexiglass, walk-up windows, heat lamps, fans, tents, propane, weights, tables, chairs).
- Additional transportation costs incurred to maintain social distancing.
- Additional worker housing costs incurred to maintain social distancing or to allow for quarantining of new or exposed employees.
- Medical: unreimbursed costs associated with providing or enabling vaccinations, testing or healthcare treatment of infected employees, including any paid leave.

Applications for commercial participants will open Friday, July 1, 2022, at 9 a.m. on the MDMR website at dmr.ms.gov/SPRS. The application process will be open for 47 days.

Participation is limited to Mississippi resident applicants who must have possessed a valid Mississippi resident commercial seafood processor license (type 16) which must be supported by appropriate MDMR agency issued certifications, during the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 license year or other activities, such as being eligibly licensed as a processing vessel as outlined by the grant. Catfish Processors will also be considered for eligibility and will be identified in reference to Mississippi Catfish Processor Fair Practices Act State Statute § 69-7-661. Beneficiaries will be eligible for reimbursement for costs incurred between January 27, 2020, and December 31, 2021.

The following information will be needed for the application process: contact information, email address, all applicable 2019-2020, 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 fishing year license numbers, social security number or employer ID tax number, completed W- 9 and applicable revenue loss information (proper documentation of expenses).

Applications close Tuesday, August 16, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. No late applications will be considered and there will be no appeals if the deadline is missed. All applications will be reviewed as they are received, and the funding allocation has been structured so that all applications submitted before the deadline will be considered.

For assistance submitting an application, contact the MDMR at 228-374-5000. For questions regarding the status of an application or payment, or if an email with completed individual application information is not received, contact Erik Broussard at 228-523-4032 or email SPRS@dmr.ms.gov.

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