

Working Waterfront Resilience Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. How much money is available?

Up to \$25 million is available to support restoring operability and improving resiliency of Maine's critical working waterfront infrastructure. To allocate these funds, the State will evaluate proposals submitted by individuals or entities that meet the eligibility criteria specified in the [Request for Applications \(RFA\)](#). Due to the statutory criteria that these projects must provide a "significant and compelling community benefit", the State will first review and make awards to projects supporting 20 or more licensed commercial fishermen and/or aquaculturists. If funds remain available after these projects have been reviewed and allocated, the State will then review projects supporting 10 or more licensed commercial fishermen and/or aquaculturists.

2. What is the role of towns in the grant process and how do they indicate their willingness to sponsor?

Towns must agree to sponsor proposed projects located within the municipality. To affirm their willingness to do this, they must sign the final sheet of the application, as directed. Towns will provide oversight for these projects in a similar manner as Locally Administered Projects (LAPs) but generally limited to invoice verification and financial accounting. MaineDOT will offer support and guidance to minimize municipal burden and make the process as streamlined as possible. Towns will confirm information the applicant provides regarding materials purchased and construction completed. Funds will be provided by DOT to the town, who will then disburse them to the property owner. Information on Locally Administered Project (LAP) requirements can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/lpa/>

3. Do I need to have previously documented damage from the Winter storms through MEMA or elsewhere in order to be eligible?

No, the damage documentation through the MEMA process was for the purpose of securing the federal disaster declaration and is not a requirement to apply to this Program.

4. What are eligible project expenses?

The purpose of this Program is to rebuild wharves and piers that were damaged in the coastal storms of Winter 2024 and improve their resiliency to future storm events. Funds requested through this program must be for the purpose of rebuilding the wharf or pier and associated structures (e.g. bait sheds) and systems (e.g. electrical, fuel) in a manner that is more resilient to future events. Completed wharf and pier projects will also be considered for funding. Wharf or fishing equipment, such as forklifts or traps, are not covered by the Program. Applicants must be able to document a 1:1 to match, as described in the RFA and Application.

5. What do you mean by "match"?

This Program requires a 1:1 match, which means that for every dollar contributed by this Program, the applicant must also contribute a dollar. For example, if the total cost of the project is \$600,000, the Program will contribute \$300,000 and the applicant will contribute \$300,000. For

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this reason, your total award cannot exceed 50% of your total project cost. This Program does not accept “in-kind” match, so you cannot use donated labor to meet this requirement. Projects that have used or will use in-kind labor are eligible for 50% of materials expenses in these cases.

6. What types of expenses are NOT eligible?

This Program will not replace ancillary equipment damaged or lost in the storms (e.g. fork lifts, lobster traps, etc.) Expenses associated with restaurants or other businesses located on working waterfront properties are also not eligible for this Program. Please see the Program administered by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to determine if you may be eligible to apply for additional funding for those types of business expenses. Information about this Program will be available on the DECD website at <https://www.maine.gov/decd/business-development/financial-incentives-resources/resources/business-recovery-resilience-fund> when it opens later in May.

7. What types of modifications will be considered to make my project more resilient?

Please see the document “[Working Waterfront Resiliency Requirement Guidelines](#)” for guidance on the types of modifications to wharves and piers, buildings and systems that will be considered sufficient to make a proposed project eligible for this Program. All components of a project proposed for funding must demonstrate the objective of increasing resilience to future weather events.

8. What if the cost of my project ends up being higher than the bid upon which my award is based?

Once the award is made based on the budget provided in the application, the State will not be able to contribute additional funds if project costs increase. The goal of the Program is to allocate all available funds – therefore, once allocated, we do not anticipate a source of additional funding.

9. How and when will funding be provided?

The law providing these funds will go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, so funds are expected to be available sometime in August. The State will make approval decisions in advance of the funds becoming available, and notify applicants whose projects have been approved for funding. Funds will be provided as reimbursement for expenses incurred upon project completion based on invoices provided and will be passed through the sponsoring municipality.

10. If I have already completed my project, can I still apply?

Yes, as long as you initiated your project after January 10, 2024, in response to damage caused by the winter 2024 coastal storms.

11. I have a question that is not addressed here – who can I ask?

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Please carefully read the [RFA](#) and [Application](#), as additional detail is provided there. In addition, we will be offering two webinars during the application period – on May 15 at 4 pm and May 28 at 4 pm. Information on how to join the webinar will be provided on the DMR website under “Meetings”. [You can also submit your question through an online form available here](#). Depending on the nature of your question, staff may call you to discuss, or update this FAQ if your question is something that other applicants may also need to know. Finally, you may call 207.624.6576 to leave a voicemail with your question. Staff will return calls as quickly as possible, but depending on the call volume, it may not be on the same day on which you leave a message.

12. What should I do if I am having trouble getting estimates for a project I have not already started?

We understand that marine contractors are extremely busy at this time, given the impacts of the storms all along the coast. If you cannot get a quote on your proposed work by the application deadline, you could consider contacting a consulting firm to try to secure an estimate based on an evaluation by a marine engineer. Any fees associated with this work are eligible for inclusion in your project budget.

13. What if my property includes multiple businesses (e.g. a commercial fishing wharf and a restaurant) and I have already completed a project on the property which includes both businesses. Can I still apply?

Yes, the components of your project that serve the commercial fishing industry (the wharf used to land product, or access a vessel) are eligible for this Program, but you would need to remove any expenses you incurred associated with the repairs to the restaurant. Your contractor should be able to assist you in reviewing your invoices to separate the expenses associated with the different activities.

14. Can federal monies be used as match, e.g. FEMA or ARPA funds?

Yes, if your project is publicly owned infrastructure that is eligible for FEMA funds, or if a municipality used ARPA funds toward the project, you can use those funds as match for these State dollars. We want to ensure that anyone eligible for FEMA funds is first accessing that money. To be clear, this Program can not provide funds for expenses already covered by FEMA relief.

15. What if we have applied for federal monies (e.g. FEMA disaster funds) but do not know what we may receive?

In your application, detail what funds you have applied for and where you are in the process.

16. What if my town is not willing to sponsor my application?

The purpose of the involvement of towns is to expedite the distribution of funds and encourage community engagement in these projects. If your municipality will not sponsor your project please

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note that in your application, and if you are able, explain the nature of the issue. If selected, DOT will engage to try to find an appropriate solution if possible.

17. I own a wharf that provides services to the fishing industry (e.g. fuel) but it is not used to land catch or access vessels. Can I still apply?

Under the current Program, we will only fund projects that support commercial fishing or aquaculture by providing a location to land catch or access their vessel for the purpose of making a fishing trip.

18. Is there a deadline by which a project must be completed?

There is no set deadline by which projects must be completed. However, DOT needs project timelines for internal planning processes. All applications should outline the estimated timeline for project milestones.

19. Do I need to have permits in hand when the application is submitted?

No, you do not need them in hand, however the application should outline the steps you have taken to identify the needed permits and any information you may have about when they may be obtained.

20. What if I need a loan for the match but have not yet closed on the loan?

If you are able, provide a letter of commitment from your lender. Confirmation of match will not be required until such time as contracts are established.

21. What counts as a license holder for the purpose of the minimum threshold of ten commercial fishermen?

For this purpose, you may include any commercial license issued by the DMR, including student lobster licenses.

22. What if I need help completing my application?

Understanding the importance of this opportunity to coastal communities, both the Island Institute and the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association have dedicated resources to helping people complete and submit their applications. You can reach out to them in the following ways to find out more about how they may be able to assist.

- Maine Coast Fishermen's Association: Monique Coombs
monique@mainecoastfishermen.org, 207.956.0752
- Island Institute: Olivia Richards
orichards@islandinstitute.org, 207.535.9298