

Working Waterfront Resiliency Grant Program

Request for Applications

Overview of the Grant Opportunity

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) are seeking applications for the Working Waterfront Resiliency Grant Program, to direct funding to the owners of critical working waterfront infrastructure that provides significant and compelling community benefits, such as maintaining and improving the local or regional economy and employment opportunities. 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.

This Request for Applications (RFA) document provides instructions for submitting applications. The program is administered by DMR, DOT, and GOPIF and uses state funding.

To be eligible to apply for funding in this Program, an applicant and their property must meet all of the following criteria:

- The applicant must be the owner of the property for which funding is sought.
- The wharf or pier must have sustained damage in the winter 2024 storms that impacted its operability. The proposed work must seek to restore the operability of the wharf or pier, and to increase its resilience to the impacts of climate change. Completed wharf and pier projects will also be considered for funding provided that they meet other Program requirements.
- The wharf or pier must be located in Maine and used for the purpose of supporting commercial fishing or aquaculture activities, including either landing catch or accessing vessels for the purpose of making a fishing trip. In circumstances where mixed use occurs, commercial use in these industries must be the predominant activity.
- A property must be consistently used in the ways described above by a minimum of 10 licensed commercial fishermen or aquaculturists.

Applicants may request up to \$2,000,000 toward design, permitting and construction costs for their project. Funds awarded through this Program cannot be used to pay more than 50% of total project costs (that is, applicants must provide match on a 1:1 basis). All match must be directly related to the proposed project and tasks, and necessary substantiating documentation must be provided.

Projects will be selected following an interagency review including staff from DMR, DOT, and GOPIF who will evaluate and equally weight the following aspects of a proposal in selecting projects for funding:

1. **Project Specifications:** Projects must include the reconstruction and improvement of the damaged wharf or pier, as well as associated support buildings (e.g. bait sheds) and systems (e.g. electrical and fuel). The project may include work and expenses incurred after January 10, 2024. Wharf or fishing equipment, such as forklifts or traps, are not covered by the Program.
2. **Climate Adaptation and Resiliency:** Projects must demonstrate efforts to make the restored structures and systems more resilient to future storm events.
3. **Commercial Fishing/Aquaculture Utility:** Properties must demonstrate utility to the commercial fishing and/or aquaculture industries.
4. **Community Benefit:** Properties must demonstrate a “significant and compelling community benefit” as required by the authorizing legislation. The degree to which a property provides a community benefit will be assessed by an evaluation of the number of commercial fishermen and/or aquaculturists using the facility annually to land product or access their vessel. To be counted in this calculation, commercial fishermen must hold commercial licenses issued by DMR and aquaculturists must hold commercial licenses or leases issued by DMR.

Applications received will be divided into two tiers. Tier 1 properties are those which support 20 or more licensed commercial fishermen or aquaculturists. Tier 2 properties are those which support a minimum of 10 but less than 20 licensed commercial fishermen or aquaculturists. The Review Panel will initially review and select projects from Tier 1. If funds remain after the Tier 1 projects have been selected and funded, projects in Tier 2 will be reviewed and selected for funding.

The review panel will strive to ensure geographic distribution of the funds to the communities impacted by the winter 2024 storms. The State reserves the right to partially fund projects. Additional consideration will be given to properties that are encumbered with a working waterfront covenant, ensuring their ongoing availability for commercial fishing and aquaculture uses.

The review panel may consult with other state agencies as necessary to complete their work.

If selected for an award, the applicant will be required to submit periodic progress updates and a final project report. Updates will include description of progress, any scheduling changes, and invoicing/payments.

The municipalities where these projects are located will be asked to help in the grant process utilizing a streamlined approach adapted from MaineDOT’s Locally Administered Project (LAP) program. Municipal sponsorship will require the municipality to act as a pass-through for funding to the applicant and confirm that invoiced work has been completed.

Applications must be submitted as specified in the application document and received by Monday, June 10, 2024. If an application is submitted in hard copy, it must be postmarked no later than June 10, 2024.