



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA – DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

Federally Funded Disaster Relief Program for Hurricane Florence

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of this program?

The purpose of this program is to provide direct economic assistance to fishery stakeholders of North Carolina who suffered damages and losses of revenue due to Hurricane Florence in 2018. Direct payments will be provided to stakeholders who qualify for assistance based on their losses and will help to cover some of the damages while increasing community resiliency in face of future natural disasters.

How much money is being distributed?

Federal funds of \$7,589,618 are going to be distributed to eligible stakeholders.

Who is eligible?

The stakeholder groups eligible for relief from this program are seafood processors and dealers, for-hire fishing businesses, bait and tackle shops, and ocean fishing piers. These stakeholder groups did not receive economic assistance from the previous state funded Hurricane Florence program.

How do I apply?

NCDMF has mailed application packets (cover letter, application, self-certifying affidavit, substitute W-9) to all eligible license holders. These application documents are also available on the NCDMF website for anyone to download, complete, and mail in. Please see contact information listed below if you have any additional questions on how to apply.

The application period will be open for 45 days. You will need to provide documentation of revenue loss suffered from September 1st to November 30th of 2018 compared to the previous three years (2015 to 2017), and documentation for damages you suffered directly resulting from Hurricane Florence. Trip ticket data can be used to estimate revenue losses for seafood dealers. Any losses covered by insurance are not eligible to be included in your claimed damages.

What kind of Documentation is required?

Along with the application, self-certification affidavit, and Substitute W-9 form, you must include:

- Proof of NCDMF-issued fish dealer licenses, pier licenses or for-hire licenses, where applicable.
- Copy of valid North Carolina issued driver's license or state identity card issued by the NC Division of Motor Vehicles.
- Any other business permits or licenses issued by local and municipal government agencies that may have been issued to the applicant.
- Any corporations, limited liability, registered 'doing business as' or other legal documentation demonstrating the type of business, filed with the NC Secretary of State, if applicable.
- Sales records such as, but not limited to, receipts, book-keeping ledgers (paper or electronic), or trip tickets.
- Pictures of damages and **receipts for purchased materials or services used to repair damages**, if applicable.
- Other supporting documentation such as payment records, payroll files, repair estimates, notarized statements from buyers, or others will be accepted if the documentation substantiates the applicant's claim of lost revenue and damages.

When can I expect to hear back about my application?

You can expect to hear back about your application 90 days after the application period has closed. You will receive a letter that says whether your application was approved or denied and why. You can submit an appeal if you were denied and want to provide additional documentation.

Why aren't commercial fishermen and shellfish growing operations eligible to apply?

Commercial fishermen and shellfish growers were already provided with relief money to cover lost landings revenue from Hurricane Florence via a program completed in 2019. This new relief program targets stakeholders who have not yet been provided with any funds to help cover losses and damages from Hurricane Florence. A copy of the State Relief plan can be found on the DMF website (<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/grant-programs/economic-relief-programs#state-funded-disaster-relief-program-for-hurricane-florence>).

How will the money be received? Are there any limits on how I can spend the money?

The money will be received via direct payment. You will be mailed a check that you can deposit. There are no limits on how the money must be spent. It is intended to help cover damages from Hurricane Florence. Assistance will be subject to state and federal tax requirements and that state and federal auditors can audit records of those who receive funds.

What if I already paid to have damages from the hurricane repaired? Am I still eligible for funds?

You can still claim those damages in your application by providing documentation of when they occurred and how much you paid to have them repaired. However, if you were already reimbursed by your insurance for these losses, you may not claim them in your application.

If I belong to more than one stakeholder group, can I send in applications for more than one of my businesses since they all lost income and suffered damages? What if I am an employee?

No. You may only apply as part of one stakeholder group. This is because funds are limited, and we need to help as many stakeholders as possible. Employees are not eligible for assistance.

Why didn't I receive an application in the mail? Can I still apply?

Bait and tackle shops and processor-only businesses will not be mailed an application but can still apply. Otherwise, you may not have received an application packet in the mail if your address with NCDMF is outdated or you were not a North Carolina resident in September of 2018. If you were a North Carolina resident at the time of Hurricane Florence, you can still apply by downloading the application forms from the website (<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/grant-programs/economic-relief-programs#federally-funded-disaster-relief-program-for-hurricane-florence>), filling them out, and mailing them in. If you were not a resident of North Carolina, you are not eligible to apply.

Who can I contact with questions about the program or the application process?

NCDMF website link: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries>

Call or email NCDMF with any questions you have about this program, contact information below.