

USDA Seeks Comments, Will Host Listening Sessions on Support for Seafood Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) seeks comments regarding the development, coordination and implementation of a grant program intended to provide support to seafood producers and processors impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Comments can be submitted through midnight ET on March 31, 2021, via [online portal](#) or by email to AMSCOVIDStimulus@usda.gov. We welcome feedback from all interested parties, and we appreciate early response. Additional information is available on the AMS website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/ams-covid-stimulus>.

In addition, AMS will host listening sessions to provide groups and individuals an opportunity to share their views on how USDA can best serve the industry through this program. Stakeholders are invited to register to provide oral comments during the sessions. There will be one session for the Pacific and Alaska fisheries and another for the Atlantic and Gulf fisheries

Listening Session Information

The listening session will be conducted via webinar using ZOOM.

Dates and Times:

March 17, 2021 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. ET Pacific and Alaska Fisheries

March 18, 2021 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. ET Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fisheries

Registration: Registration will remain open until the start of the event, or until the session is full. However, you must register by midnight ET the day before each session, to provide oral comments during the listening session. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Registrants who request to speak will be contacted by a staff member and must participate in a practice session to test audio requirements. Speakers will be introduced by a moderator; and speaking time is no more than three minutes.

March 17, 2021: [Register in advance for this webinar.](#)

March 18, 2021: [Register in advance for this webinar.](#)

AMS will make the agenda for the sessions available the day before each session.

Contact

Questions regarding the listening session can be directed to AMSCOVIDStimulus@usda.gov. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

AMS encourages comments from smaller businesses, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged producers, veteran producers, and underserved communities, and/or organizations representing these entities. AMS expects commenters writing or speaking on behalf of these entities to engage and involve them in planning comments.

Background: Sec. 751 of the COVID Stimulus Package, part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provides no less than \$1.5B to purchase food and agricultural products, including seafood, fresh produce, dairy, and meat products, to distribute to individuals in need, including through delivery to nonprofit organizations that can receive, store, and distribute food items, and for grants and loans to small or mid-sized food processors or distributors, seafood processing facilities and processing vessels, farmers markets, producers, or other organizations to respond to coronavirus, including for measures to protect workers against COVID-19.