



### **Online portal launched for importer refunds**

U.S. Customs and Border Patrol has a new portal set up for businesses to apply for refunds on some of the tariffs paid. Through the ACE website, the Consolidated Administration and Processing Entries (CAPE) is an effort to simplify the process so importers can receive their refund with interest through one electronic payment.

For more information, read the [Trade Information Notice](#).

### **Festival grant window opens mid-May**

The Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism's Competitive Grant Program is opening its application window mid-May.

The grant is available to encourage and support marketing for Louisiana fairs, festivals and other eligible tourism events that attract and retain visitors to the state. The maximum award is \$15,000 for advertising expenses with a 50% or 66% reimbursable match paid after the event has ended.

Applications are made a minimum of 90 days prior to the start of the tourism event in the [Industry Portal](#). Contact Lynne Coxwell at [lcoxwell@crt.la.gov](mailto:lcoxwell@crt.la.gov) or at 225-342-2876 for more information.

## **Low-interest loans offered due to drought impact**

The U.S. Small Business Administration has announced that low-interest federal disaster loans to small businesses and private nonprofit organizations in Louisiana are available to offset losses caused by drought beginning Dec. 30, 2025.

The economic-injury disaster loans are available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, nurseries and private nonprofit in 47 parishes (including Terrebonne and Lafourche) plus a handful of counties in Mississippi and Texas. Loans of up to \$2 million are available for working capital needs, even if no physical damage was suffered. The loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that could not be paid due to the disaster.

To apply online by Dec. 10, 2026, visit [sba.gov/disaster](https://sba.gov/disaster), or call (800) 659-2955 for more information.



## **Business organizations' events**

### ***Business women award college scholarships May 12***

The Women's Business Alliance of the Bayou Region will award college scholarships and hear from Marilyn Macik-Frey, Ph.D., of Nicholls State University's Al Danos College of Business Administration at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 12 at Plantation Inn, 1381 W. Tunnel Blvd. in Houma. Cost is \$25 for members, \$35 for nonmembers. [Register here](#).

### ***Overview of Unemployment Insurance set May 14***

The Bayou Society of Human Resource Management features "Integrity Matters -- Overview of UI Basics" featuring Stephen Clarke, employer liaison with the Office of UI Administration from Louisiana Works, for its luncheon 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, May 14 at Plantation Inn, 1381 West Tunnel Blvd., Houma. Guest registration is \$30; register [here](#).

***Metal Shark CEO featured at SCIA luncheon May 19***

South Central Industrial Association will feature Chris Allard, CEO of Metal Shark, at its Tuesday, May 19 luncheon, 11:15 a.m.-1 p.m. at Courtyard Marriott, 142 Library Drive in Houma. Ticket deadline is 5 p.m. May 12; [register here](#).

***Grow Louisiana featured at Chamber luncheon May 26***

The Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce will feature Marc Ehrhardt with Grow Louisiana at its May 26th luncheon, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plantation Inn, 1381 W. Tunnel Blvd. in Houma.

Cost is \$35 for members, \$45 for nonmembers. [Register here](#).

***Employee growth topic of June 11 SHRM meeting***

"Maximizing Employee Performance and Growth" will be the topic addressed by Jim Stodd, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, of JT Stodd & Associates, at the Thursday, June 11 meeting of Bayou SHRM at The Oaks, 108 St. Patrick Street in Thibodaux. Register [here](#).



***Free seminars available in SBA Virtual Summit May 5-6***

Various presentations are planned during the SBA's two-day online celebration of National Small Business Week. Topics include protecting businesses from risk and fraud, access to capital, AI, business continuity, small business manufacturing, video content 101, strategies for business growth, hiring secrets and winning contracts.

For a schedule of seminars and to register for the free event, [click here](#).



## **Online training to start or grow your business**

SCORE and the Louisiana Small Business Development Center offer free or low-cost online training for startup and existing businesses on various topics, including:

- "Turn HubSpot Breeze into Your Virtual Team: Automate Follow-ups, Content & Customer Support" will be online 3-4 p.m. Tuesday, May 5; [register here](#).
- "Business Credit 101: Build Credit, Access Funding and Grow Your Business" will be online 10 a.m. Wednesday, May 6. [Register here](#).
- "How to Design Your Website to Attract, Engage and Convert More Customers" will be online 11:15 a.m. Thursday, May 7. [Register here](#).
- "Stop Overpaying for Marketing Tools: How to Choose the Right All-in-One Platform for Your Business" will be online 3-4 p.m. Thursday, May 7; [register here](#).
- "How to Turn Your Side Hustle Into a Full-Time Business" will be online at 1:45 p.m. Thursday, May 7. [Register here](#).
- "Why Your LinkedIn Post Get Ignored and How to Start Attracting Real Customers" will be online 3-4 p.m. Tuesday, May 12. [Register here](#).
- "Getting Your Business Loan Ready: What Lenders Want to See" will be online 9:30-10:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 19. [Register here](#).

Find more training opportunities from [LSBDC](#) and with [SCORE](#).

