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Seafood Businesses Sought for No-Cost Training Program to Catalyze Local and Regional Food Systems

Applications now open for Scale Your Local Catch business accelerator

ORONO, Maine (September 27, 2021) – Small and mid-size seafood businesses across the United States are invited to apply for the inaugural cohort of [Scale Your Local Catch \(SYLC\)](#), a no-cost five-month virtual business accelerator program designed to train seafood producers on marketing their catch directly to consumers, scaling their business, and building greater resiliency within local and regional food systems. Applications are [open online](#) through November 5, 2021, for the program beginning in early December and concluding in April 2022.

SYLC is produced by [Local Catch Network](#), based at the University of Maine, and is offered at no cost through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP). SYLC was developed in partnership with [Ecotrust](#) with the goal of strengthening local and regional seafood systems by addressing challenges associated with direct marketing and by building the knowledge, skills, and networks needed for direct marketing seafood businesses to scale up their operations and increase their capacity and viability for long-term resilience.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to engage with and facilitate connections between innovative small-scale and community-based seafood producers to strengthen local and regional seafood systems,” said Jordan Richardson, Coordinator of the Local Catch Network.

“We’ve successfully built a training program for farmers, ranchers, and fishers in the Northwest to expand their ability to feed the region. I’m excited to work with the Local Catch Network and our partners to expand the model and reach communities across the country,” said Tyson Rasor, Fisheries & Food Systems Program Manager at Ecotrust.

Program topics include business structure, taxation, accounting, credit/finance, market development, and additional topics. Participants will receive customized business support from service providers and consultants who understand the unique needs of fishers and seafood harvesters who want to build financial viability, strengthen their business structure, and grow with integrity.

Applicants should meet all selection criteria. Preference may be given to applicants who:

- Are Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or identify as a person of color
- Are Women
- Are located in a remote/rural community with a population(s) of less than 25,000 ●
Produce a value-added product from a raw commodity they are fishing, raising, or harvesting

Interested applicants can [register here](#) to attend an information session on October 15, 2021 from 1-2pm ET. For full program information and to apply, visit <https://localcatch.org/scale-your-local-catch/> or contact Jordan Richardson (Jordan.Richardson@maine.edu) and Tyson Rasor (trasor@ecotrust.org) with any questions.

About the Local Catch Network

The Local Catch Network, based at the University of Maine, is an inclusive, values-based network of 500+ seafood harvesters, researchers, and community organizations from across North America. LCN members support and promote safe, direct, transparent and profitable “boat-to-fork” systems of local and regional seafood distribution, such as Community Supported Fisheries (CSFs) and similar models. LCN is governed by a volunteer Executive Committee responsible for supporting the growth and development of the network, with backbone support from the North American Marine Alliance. FMI: <https://localcatch.org/>.

About Ecotrust

Ecotrust creates and accelerates triple-bottom-line innovations to benefit our region and inspire the world. Our work is rooted in the region from California to Alaska that holds productive lands and determined people. On the farm, at the coast, in the forest, and across our cities, we work in partnership towards an equitable, prosperous, climate-smart future. We recognize the legacy of colonialism and the deep inequities of this place, and we believe that radical, practical change is possible and necessary. Since 1991, we have created durable change and sparked ideas across the globe. Join us at ecotrust.org.

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