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The Local Catch Network Supports Fishing Communities throughout USDA Grant Application Process *LCN provided outreach, education and technical assistance to seafood businesses around the country*

ORONO, Maine (August 5, 2021) – In an effort to bring greater visibility to the importance of seafood in local and regional food systems, the Local Catch Network (LCN) provided more than 150 hours of outreach, education and technical assistance from April to June, 2021 to directly support fishing communities seeking to apply for $77 million in competitive grant funding allocated via the 2018 Farm Bill's Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) and distributed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

While USDA competitive grant funding programs have been instrumental in strengthening local and regional food systems around the country, seafood businesses and other related organizations have historically not taken full advantage of them, in part due to lack of awareness and misconceptions about application eligibility.

To address this, LCN conducted outreach initiatives that reached more than 36,000 people through the organization's newsletter, direct outreach, and an op-ed in National Fisherman. LCN also hosted an informational session for prospective applicants and a targeted proposal development workshop led by a former USDA staff member with more than 25 years of experience. The events drew 147 and 60 attendees, respectively.

Additionally, LCN offered one-on-one technical assistance to 35 organizations and businesses, which included providing answers to questions about the application, pre-consultations to help develop project ideas and technical reviews of draft application materials. In total, 12 organizations that LCN worked with successfully submitted proposals for this round of funding, which closed in June 2021.

"USDA competitive grant programs like LAMP can be transformational for local seafood businesses and the communities they support," said Joshua Stoll, founder of the Local Catch Network and Assistant Professor of Marine Policy at the University of Maine. "We will continue to work to raise awareness about the availability of these programs and expand our technical assistance support for our members, BIPOC communities and community-supported fisheries across North America."

To learn more about LCN's technical assistance offerings, visit https://localcatch.org/technical assistance/ or reach out to the Local Catch Network Coordinator, Jordan Richardson at Jordan.Richardson@maine.edu.

About Local Catch Network

Established in 2011, the Local Catch Network (LCN) is a hub for knowledge exchange and innovation to support and catalyze local and community-based seafood systems. Today, the network is made up of more than 500 members, including over 200 seafood businesses from across North America. Members of the Local Catch Network align with a set of core values that aim to create a higher level of accountability and trust, both internally within the network and externally to the public. Local Catch Network members include seafood harvesters who sell their catch locally and regionally through direct marketing channels as well as those engaged in research, technical assistance, and community organizing. LCN is governed by a volunteer Executive Committee that is responsible for supporting the growth and development of the network. The network is based at the University of Maine with additional backbone support from the North American Marine Alliance. *FMI: https://localcatch.org/.*

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