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Direct Marketing Seafood Businesses Sought for Second Cohort of No-Cost Business Accelerator Program

Applications now open for Scale Your Local Catch business accelerator

ORONO, Maine (August 16, 2022) – Small and mid-size seafood businesses across the United States are invited to apply for the second cohort of [Scale Your Local Catch \(SYLC\)](#), a four-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 October 14th, for the program beginning in early December 2022 and concluding in March 2023.

SYLC is produced by [Local Catch Network](#), and is offered at no cost through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP). SYLC is developed in partnership with [Ecotrust](#) with the goal of strengthening local and regional seafood systems by addressing challenges associated with direct marketing.

"As we enter the second year of SYLC programming, we look forward to facilitating conversations and connections between values-based seafood producers and technical assistance providers. Creating space for knowledge sharing and relationship building has proven to be essential to the success of small and mid-scale seafood businesses," said Jordan Richardson, Coordinator of the Local Catch Network.

Although the core curriculum of the program includes topics like business structure formation, taxation, accounting, credit/finance, and market development, a large focus of SYLC is expanding support and social networks within the cohort. 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.

A past SYLC cohort member shared that the program enabled them to establish new systems including, "The accounting sessions spurred us to re-organize and set up new categories in our accounting and bookkeeping systems. With the help of the labor and employment session, we reclassified our workers, and the marketing sessions motivated us to transition e-commerce platforms, set up our social media stores, ramp up our analytics tracking, evaluate our branding, and more".

Applicants should meet all selection criteria [linked here](#). Preference will be given to fishers and harvesters who:

- Are Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or identify as a person of color;
- Are women;
- Live in/serve low income/low access areas, and.or;
- 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 September 14th from 4-5PM 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 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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