

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Laughton Elliott-DeAngelis
Local Catch Network
info@localcatch.org



Direct Marketing Seafood Businesses Sought for 4th Cohort of No-Cost Business Accelerator Program

Applications now open for SAIL Catalyst business accelerator

ORONO, Maine (November 4, 2024) – Small and mid-size seafood businesses across the United States are invited to apply for the third cohort of [SAIL Catalyst](#) (formerly Scale Your Local Catch), a 14-week 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 December 17th, for the program beginning in February 4, 2025 and concluding April 22, 2025.

SAIL Catalyst is produced by [Local Catch Network](#), and is offered at no cost through grant funding. SAIL Catalyst is developed in partnership with [Ecotrust](#) with the goal of strengthening local and regional seafood systems by addressing challenges associated with direct marketing.

“We are excited to be offering additional services this year under our Seafood Accelerator & Innovation Lab (SAIL) umbrella. In addition to SAIL Catalyst we are also piloting a mentorship program for four seafood businesses in our network. We have seen first hand the value created when community-based seafood businesses have the support of technical assistance. This year’s Catalyst cohort of fifteen will gain fundamental business skills, but as importantly they will get to learn from each other,” said Laughton Elliott-DeAngelis, 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 SAIL Catalyst 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 Catalyst 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, Latine, or identify as a person of color;
- Are women or LGBTQIA+
- Produce a value-added product from a raw commodity they are fishing, raising, or harvesting

Interested applicants are invited to join a live information session on December 2nd, registration will be made available on the [Community Discussions](#) page . For full program information and to apply, visit <https://localcatch.org/sail-catalyst/> or contact Laughton Elliott-DeAngelis(info@localcatch.org) 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 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.

###