



Maine Grains

## CatalystFund



CEI is raising \$2,000,000 in grant funding to capitalize the CEI Catalyst Fund for early stage investments in food system and natural resource businesses with the potential for high growth, job creation, and positive environmental and social impacts in Maine and the northeast.

CEI's Catalyst Fund recognizes the lack of early stage capital for natural resource businesses. To date, the fund has invested over \$890,000 in food and aquaculture businesses that offer good jobs and positive environmental and social impacts supporting a thriving, robust food system.

**Are you looking for opportunities to put capital to work growing rural economies in Maine and the northeast? If so, CEI would like to work with you.**



Crown O'Maine Organic Cooperative

### COASTAL ENTERPRISES, INC.

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### CATALYST FUND INVESTMENT

Since 2016, CEI has invested \$890,000 of early stage equity in promising businesses in the food, aquaculture, and natural resource sectors.

#### Recent examples include:

Maine Grains, Skowhegan, ME

American Unagi, Bristol, ME

Forager, Falmouth, ME

Ocean Approved, Saco, ME

Farming Fungi, Springdale, ME

Farmers To You, Barre, VT

Crown O'Maine Organic Cooperative, Vassalboro, ME

### OPPORTUNITY

As the demand for local foods has increased in unprecedented ways, Maine's entrepreneurs are racing to keep up. Food system businesses are enjoying increased market share, yet struggle to access capital so they can grow and thrive. This is where CEI comes in:

- Food system and natural resource businesses often lack access to early stage risk capital and therefore rely heavily on traditional debt financing. CEI's Catalyst Fund addresses this by providing long term, flexible and patient capital that seeks not only financial returns, but also social and environmental benefits.
- Early stage businesses need more than capital. The Catalyst Fund connects businesses to CEI's technical assistance and advising services to support growth and mitigate risk.
- Entrepreneurs who operate outside of the economic mainstream typically have a tougher time accessing capital. CEI has 40 years of experience providing financing to people on the margins of the economy; the Catalyst Fund builds on that legacy to meet needs of vulnerable populations.



American Unagi

# CEI CATALYST FUND

CEI's Catalyst Fund offers patient, flexible capital to businesses poised for significant growth. Structured typically as convertible debt or preferred stock CEI's catalytic financing gives businesses the runway they need to scale operations and position themselves for later-stage capital—debt and equity.

Geography: Maine and New England

Investment size: up to \$100,000

Transaction types: flexible structuring, long-term investment horizon, blended capital

Food-related investments are one of the fastest-growing segments of CEI's mission-driven investment portfolio. Other eligible businesses include biobased and renewable energy innovators pioneering new models and critical infrastructure to scale rural economies in Maine and the northeast.



## CURRENT FOOD SYSTEMS PORTFOLIO

Over its 40-year history, CEI has loaned and invested more than \$57 million in food system enterprises and leveraged an additional \$135 million from financial partners.

CEI's food system impact over the past 10 years:

- 1,007 jobs for Maine people in the local food system;
- 301 food entrepreneurs received technical business planning assistance;
- 8,000 acres of farmland maintained in production;
- and 24 coastal access areas totaling 1.36 shoreline miles preserved for commercial fishing.



## WHY WORK WITH US?

Since 1977, CEI has offered a solutions-oriented approach to community investing by partnering with funders to transform local economies. We believe that long-term sustainability depends on profitable businesses that can create good jobs, steward natural resources, and contribute to more broadly shared prosperity.

With an integrated team of food system experts, business advisors, workforce professionals, and lenders, CEI is uniquely positioned to build connections and collaborations among stakeholders throughout the region's food systems. The rapid growth of CEI's food system work is leveraged with strong working relationships with external agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries partners, together with investors and financial institutions statewide and beyond.

## ABOUT CEI

CEI helps to grow good jobs, environmentally sustainable enterprises, and shared prosperity in Maine and other rural regions by integrating financing, business and industry expertise, and policy solutions. We envision a world in which communities are economically and environmentally healthy, enabling all people, especially those with low incomes, to reach their full potential.

## CONTACT US

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