



**Welcome to
The Culinary Catapult Program
Overview & Calendar**

Program Goals:

- To encourage innovation and sustainability for culinary entrepreneurs through training and investment.
- To assist entrepreneurs in developing and accessing growth opportunities to take their business to the next level of success.
- To provide the information and skillsets to survive and thrive in the evolving marketing and economic environment.

Program Components:

- Dynamic and interactive **training sessions** – consisting of expert interviews and presentations, group mastermind problem-solving, and accountability support on progress toward goals.
- Each session will include **actionable steps** to improve business performance. **“Homework”**, opportunities for the scholars to practice the application of newly learned tips/resources/strategies and to go deeper with those that are particularly relevant, will be provided and participants will be encouraged to share their experiences working through the supplemental activities and material.
- The group’s communication/resource-sharing/meeting recording archival portal will be a **private Facebook Group** that the Program Coordinator will create, administer, and moderate. All Catapult organizers are invited to also join and participate. This group “clubhouse” serves as an invaluable focal point where all participants can contribute, learn, and share at their convenience. And can be a critical source of reference for all previously covered course materials and valuable supplemental information. It is typically the highlight of the experience.
- Each participant will be matched with a highly experienced **business advisor/mentor** from the Louisiana Small Business Development Center network. They will provide additional guidance, assistance, and encouragement during and beyond the program at no charge.
- Participants will create a short (3-5 page) **Growth Plan** for their business and prepare a **Funding Pitch** that they will deliver to a panel of business/financing guests.

Program Delivery:

- The weekly sessions will be held **virtually, via Zoom, on Wednesday from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm.**
- All participants will be expected to be ON CAMERA.

- Dianne F. Sclafani, program coordinator, will oversee all registration, invitations, hosting, and food expertise.
- All Catapult Program Leadership Team Members will receive invitations to attend as well.

Program Topics:

7/12/23: 1. A Food Business Growth Plan - It's All in the Prep (Mise en Place). Introductions: There will be an overview of the program and the topics that will be covered. Participants will learn about the array of specialized resources that are available to them and how to get the most benefit from their business advisor. In this session, participants will analyze their current situation by completing a business assessment. They will learn the importance of creating a strategic growth plan and its component parts. This will include diving into the sections of the growth plan throughout the sessions and preparing for the pitch at the end of the course. The growth plan will be used to develop the pitch.

7/19/23: 2. A New Day, A New Way for Food Businesses. Participants will discuss their business successes, challenges, and changes while they gain valuable information to move their business forward in their growth plan. They will learn practical tips for goal setting – including the importance of milestones, monitoring, routine re-evaluation, and refining as needed. The session helps participants through the essential process of clearly identifying their most attractive and profitable customers and business opportunities. It also covers how to begin to identify ways to best attract those targeted market segments. This is the foundational session that all marketing activities are built upon.

7/26/23: 3. Business Concept to Growing Up. Participants will learn how things change as their business grows. This session will cover the participant's prepared background and summary of the growth plan.

8/2/23: 4. Support Team. This session helps participants learn the importance of having key people on their team and using resources to help the business grow.

8/9/23: 5. The Organization and Administration. The overall goal of this session is to help participants understand what is needed in a business. This includes the structure, licenses, taxes, bookkeeping, tax returns, and tools to help such as QuickBooks.

8/16/23: 6. Getting Funding for Growth. In this session, participants will learn best practices for how to access capital to grow the business. They will learn what financial institutions look for in determining fundability as well as how the LSBDC can help them package their information to be most attractive to lenders. Participants will also learn how to effectively pitch their funding requests to lenders.

8/23/23: 7. Obtaining and Keeping Repeat Customers. The session helps participants through the essential process of clearly identifying their most attractive and profitable customers and business opportunities. It also covers how to begin to identify ways to best attract those targeted market segments.

8/30/23: 8. Operations and Management. Participants will learn how to use tools to inventory, systems, training, IT, etc. Using a POS System to the fullest and Keeping Your Data and Technology Safe. In this session, participants will learn the most important practices to

ensure data integrity for their own company as well as the data handled by their customers. IT experts will also share best practices for running a secure and productive IT network regardless of the size of the business.

9/6/23: 9. Polishing the Pitch. Participants will present and practice their pitches and obtain feedback to prepare for the judges and lenders.

9/13/23: 10. Building a Strong, Resilient Organization. This session will cover best practices for resiliency, sustainability, and scalability. It will focus on building a strong foundation through effective risk management, systems, automation, and redundancies to ensure it will be poised to endure the inevitable challenges that the future holds.

9/20/23: 11. Finding Talent & Support. Participants will gain a host of ideas for finding people who can support their business growth – from vendors to unpaid personal network options to hiring best practices.

9/27/23: 12. Pitch Contest and Graduation Ceremony. New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation Center, 1205 N Rampart St, New Orleans, LA 70116.

Program Coordination:

Dianne F. Sclafani and Myra Corrello, Ph.D., will coordinate the program in collaboration with LSBDC GNOR Center Director **Carmen Sunda.**

Dianne F. Sclafani, Culinary & Foodservice Business Development Consultant, Louisiana Small Business Development Center, Greater New Orleans, and River Region. Dianne is a business speaker, trainer, and consultant specializing in food businesses. She has over 25 years of practical experience in the restaurant, foodservice, culinary education, and food manufacturing industries. Dianne has been with the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) for 16 years. She has helped nearly 1,400 new and established local business owners to strengthen and expand their businesses. She coaches many businesses in a variety of industries in developing loan packages and investment pitches. In 2015, she developed and was the instructor for the first New Orleans Culinary Entrepreneur Training Program for Capital One's Investment for Good Program. In 2016, she created the first Jazz and Heritage Foundation's Catapult Culinary Entrepreneur Program which was also delivered in 2018. She creates restaurant and food manufacturing seminars for LSBDC clients across the State of Louisiana. Dianne was honored with the prestigious 2016 Louisiana SBDC State Star Award. Her passion is in building relationships with business owners to help them achieve their business vision for success.

