

## Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) Mobile First Catch Centers

The goal of *Take Me Fishing™ First Catch Centers* (FCC) is to provide hands-on opportunities where kids and families can learn basic fishing and boating skills along with conservation ethics. These fishing and boating educational programs will provide positive and fun experiences to families in metropolitan areas and ideally offer an opportunity for a return visit to apply the skills learned without further instruction.

### Strategic Vision & Objectives for Take Me Fishing™ Mobile First Catch Centers

*Background/vision:* Baseball has Little League, football has Pop Warner, golf has First Tee and many other sports have successful youth-development programs. Participation in these sports has benefitted greatly from them, with ongoing coaching/mentoring, and multiple hands-on opportunities. Currently, there is no organized, national effort to foster participation in recreational fishing and boating.



RBFF's vision is to develop a program that fills this void. The Take Me Fishing™ Mobile First Catch Center began as a pilot program in 2018 in partnership with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) in the greater Philadelphia area. While most fishing education programs are conducted at a brick and mortar location, the PFBC Mobile First Catch Center takes the program to urban areas and provides an experiential opportunity for participants to increase their awareness, skill and knowledge about fishing and/or boating (view: <https://vimeo.com/328016377>). During the pilot year, PFBC successfully provided more than 80 educational programs throughout Philadelphia reaching more than 8,000 people.

### Urban Outreach Critical

A key finding of RBFF's latest R3 research project with Responsive Management, *Actionable Strategies for Angler R3*, recognized the importance of communicating the relevance of fishing to urban, multicultural audiences. Urban fishing programs are vital as they bring the fishing experience directly to growing populations of Americans and increase access to fishing opportunities to minorities living in metropolitan areas. The American population is becoming more diverse—by 2060 today's minorities will be a majority. As a result, it is essential to introduce fishing to inner-city, multicultural audience as a fun way to spend time with family and friends, to relax, and to be in the outdoors.

## **Program Expansion**

As a result of a generous donation from the Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund, RBFF expanded the program to add 11 additional states by providing each state a trailer, fully wrapped with branding logos, and fully equipped with all of the necessary fishing supplies (rod and reel outfits, nets, coolers, rod racks, photo props, hooks, bobbers, lures and more) to take fishing and boating opportunities to "where the people are". The ten states participating in the Mobile First Catch Center program include: Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington. With Pennsylvania establishing the pilot program and the addition of New Mexico and the District of Columbia there are thirteen states participating in the program.

## **Criteria for Mobile First Catch Center Trailers**

- 1) Ability/commitment to host a minimum of 8 events in urban environments, providing a hands-on fishing experience to novice anglers (Note: the PFBC's Mobile Catch Center, which travels throughout the Philadelphia area, conducted approximately 70 events and reached 5,240 people during the pilot program in 2018).
- 2) Identify additional efforts the trailer will be used for to support and expand R3 efforts in urban areas and underserved demographics.
- 3) Ability to establish/maintain a database or create a customer ID for participants as well as collect data on attendees that attend a fishing event.
- 4) Identify how the state will use the database of participants to link these individuals to other local fishing opportunities, determine continued interest in boating and angling and track customers.
- 5) Integrate First Catch Center Core Components into state program. Identify other partners/associated organizations that will be used to provide assistance with scheduled events.
- 6) Develop a "Schedule of Activities" for the trailer that can be used by RBFF to help states promote attendance at the events.
- 7) Where feasible, ability to share photos of the event(s) on social media and tag @Take\_Me\_Fishing on appropriate social media channels (we recognize photos may need permission/photo release)
- 8) Participating states will provide an annual summary of accomplishments to RBFF.

## Participating Mobile FCC States

• **States with completed trailer include:**

Connecticut  
District of Columbia  
Georgia  
Kansas  
Massachusetts  
Nebraska  
New Mexico  
New York  
Oklahoma  
Pennsylvania  
Tennessee  
Virginia  
Washington

❖ **States currently developing trailer include:**

Alabama  
Arizona  
California  
Florida  
Illinois  
North Carolina  
Wisconsin

## Participating First Catch Center States (These are at a fixed location)

❖ **States operating First Catch Centers include:**

Inks Dam - USFWS - Fish Hatchery  
Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve  
Spring Creek Greenway Preserve  
Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Preserver - USFWS  
Jesse Jones Park & Nature Center, Houston TX  
Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, TPWD, TX  
Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery, NJ  
Johnson Parks and Recreation, Iowa  
PA Fish and Boat Commission (all equipment in place, looking for a local partner to operate)