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**Call for Applicants: 2016 Women in Culinary Leadership Grant
Features 20 Top Chef Mentors from Around the Country**

~ The James Beard Foundation Extending Application Deadline to February 8 ~

New York, NY (January 25, 2016) –The [James Beard Foundation \(JBF\)](#) has extended the deadline to **apply to the Women in Culinary Leadership (WICL) program to February 8, 2016**. Launched in 2012, the WICL Grant was spearheaded by Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation, and Rohini Dey, JBF trustee and founder/owner of Indian-Latin Vermilion Restaurants in NYC and Chicago. The goal of the mentoring program for aspiring chefs and restaurateurs is to help build in-depth leadership and management skills in the kitchen and in restaurant management and entrepreneurship. It has grown consecutively over the last three years, and for the class of 2016 there are currently 22 positions available offered by 19 mentors.

“Thanks to the top industry leaders who have signed on to fund and mentor these talented women, we are paving the way for each grant recipient to achieve the success they deserve as chefs or restaurateurs,” said Ungaro. “Women make up less than 7% of the head chef positions in the culinary industry; our Foundation strives to reverse this statistic with the Women in Culinary Leadership program, which has already successfully graduated six grantees from our class of 2014-2015.”

“The WICL Grant was created to break through the barriers of what I call the ‘gastro ceiling’ – a paucity of women as executive chefs and even fewer as leading restaurateurs,” added Dey. “This program is about building women’s operational skills, financial literacy, confidence and networks in the field. We started with one grantee at Vermilion, building it to seven positions last year, and now it has grown in our third year to 19 eminent restaurant groups. Mentors are not only sponsoring our WICL grantees, but are taking them into their organizations to train them and build their skills.”

Women with a background in hospitality or the culinary arts are encouraged to apply for a chance to participate across eighteen six-month or three twelve-month mentor/grantee programs with top industry leaders. The new deadline to apply is February 8, 2016, and candidates will be expected to start their grant program by June 1, 2016.

Candidates may apply for programs led by the following 2016 mentors:

1. **Kim Bartmann** – Barquette, The Third Bird, Gigi’s Café, Pat’s Tap, Red Stag Supper Club, Tiny Diner, Minneapolis, MN: smallbusinessrevolution.org/story/tiny-diner (one year position)
2. **John Besh** – Besh Restaurant Group, New Orleans: chefjohnbesh.com
3. **Elizabeth Blau** – Elizabeth Blau & Associates, Las Vegas: elizabethblau.com (offering two positions)
4. **April Bloomfield** – Spotted Pig, John Dory Oyster Bar, The Breslin, NYC: thespottedpig.com, thejohndory.com, thebreslin.com (one year position in each restaurant)
5. **Kevin Boehm and Rob Katz** – Boka Restaurant Group, Chicago: bokagr.com
6. **Kevin Brown** – Lettuce Entertain You Restaurants, Chicago: leye.com

7. *Lee Chizmar and Erin Shea* – Bolete, Bethlehem, PA: boleterestaurant.com
8. *Robini Dey* – Vermilion Restaurants, Chicago: thevermilionrestaurant.com (one year position)
9. *Tom Douglas* – Tom Douglas Restaurants, Seattle: tomdouglas.com (one year position)
10. *Paul Febrbach* – Big Jones, Chicago: bigjoneschicago.com
11. *Sam Fox* – Fox Restaurant Concepts, Phoenix: foxrc.com
12. *Linton Hopkins* – Restaurant Eugene, Atlanta: restauranteugene.com
13. *Cindy Hutson* – Ortanique Restaurants, Miami: ortaniquerestaurants.com
14. *Beth Gruitch and Jennifer Jasinski* – Rioja, a Crafted Concept Restaurant, Denver: craftedconceptsdenver.com
15. *Matt Jennings* – Townsman, Boston: townsmanboston.com
16. *Ti Adelaide Martin* – Commander's Palace, New Orleans: commanderspalace.com
17. *Cindy Pawlcyn* – Mustards Grill, Napa, CA: mustardsgrill.com
18. *Sarah Robbins* – 21c Museum Hotels: Metropole, Cincinnati, OH; Lockbox, Lexington, KY; Proof on Main, Louisville, KY: 21cmuseumhotels/restaurants.com
19. *Stephen Starr* – STARR Restaurants, Philadelphia: starr-restaurant.com

Eight female chefs have received the Women in Culinary Leadership Grant to date, and of the six who have graduated all have received job offers from their mentors. Recipients have trained and worked in various positions, including the kitchen line, inventory, sourcing, cost control, new menu development, marketing and promotion, event planning, catering, floor management, and more.

Alexandra Hare, 2015 Women in Culinary Leadership Grantee states, “By going through these past six months of WICL training, and seeing not only that I *can* do this, but learning from the people who already do, I am actually building towards achieving the goals I've set for myself. This program has been the start of something great, which means I have to keep pushing--something I feel like I'm finally prepared for.”

Arranged mentorships must be taken at times mutually agreed upon by the applicant and hosts. All mentorships must be completed within one year after they are awarded. Grantees will receive a stipend of \$500 per week for living expenses. In addition, select grantees will have the opportunity to work alongside guest chefs cooking at the historic James Beard House for one week.

Applicants must be at least 21 years of age, and have at least two years of experience in the hospitality industry. For more information about how to apply, please visit: jamesbeard.org/education/women-culinary-leadership-program.

About the James Beard Foundation (JBF)

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors America's diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, the late James Beard was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts, instilling in them the value of wholesome, healthful, and delicious food. Today JBF continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships for culinary students, publications, chef advocacy training, and thought-leader convening. The Foundation also maintains the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a “performance space” for visiting chefs. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. Get food news, recipes, and more at the James Beard Foundation's [blog](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).