



James Beard Foundation and Houston First Corporation Gather Chefs, Advocates, and Leaders in Houston for January 2023 Chef Action Summit

Policy discussions in Houston will help influence new legislation and create federal policy asks in support of the people behind America's food culture

HOUSTON, TEXAS (December 19, 2022) – Over three days from January 29-31, some of the nation's best chefs, advocates, and leaders—many of whom are alumni of the James Beard Foundation Chef Bootcamp for Policy and Change—will come together in Houston, Texas for the Foundation's preeminent [Chef Action Summit](#). In support of the people behind America's food culture, as well as a thriving, more equitable, and sustainable food system—this is only the second time the [James Beard Foundation](#) (JBF) has held a summit of this magnitude.

The James Beard Foundation, in partnership with Houston First Corporation, will host the pivotal event—resulting in a set of chef-driven policy recommendations for the 2023 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is widely regarded as one of the most important pieces of food and agriculture policy that Congress passes about every five years. The bill has considerable ramifications for national food security and access, the environment, and support for our farmers and rural America. Following the event, the recommendations will be shared with policymakers responsible for drafting the 2023 Farm Bill.

Summit participants will also influence the development of blueprints for local and state-based action, as it relates to America's food and agriculture system.

During the event, participants will have the opportunity to hear and engage with influential leaders from the policy, culinary, nonprofit, and corporate industries to address key issues such as:

- Nutrition Security and Hunger
- Conservation and Sustainability
- Improving Equity in the Industry

JamesBeard Foundation

Featured speakers—with more to be announced soon—include:

- Anne Biklé, Biologist, Science Writer, and Co-Author, *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations*; *The Hidden Half of Nature: The Microbial Roots of Life and Health*; and *Growing a Revolution: Bringing Our Soil Back to Life*
- Joel Berg, CEO, Hunger Free America
- Stacy Dean, Deputy Under Secretary for USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
- Lisa Helfman, CEO, Senior Director, Public Affairs, H-E-B, and Founder and Board Chair, Brighter Bites
- Adrian Lipscombe, Founder, 40 Acres Project
- Michel Nischan, Co-Founder and Chairman, Wholesome Wave and Founder and President, Wholesome Crave
- Karen Washington, Farmer, Activist, and Co-Owner, Rise&Root Farm

*"Across our food system—from nutrition to hunger, conservation and agriculture, worker or supply chain issues—the stakes have never been higher. The James Beard Foundation is honored to bring together chef advocates, policy and industry leaders, and key stakeholders for critical dialogue and commitment pertaining to some of this country's most pressing food issues," said **Clare Reichenbach, CEO of The James Beard Foundation**. "Chefs—with their unique ability to influence the way we think about and consume food, and as pragmatic problem solvers—have proven time and again that they are the critical champions we need for our communities and broader food system. The Foundation, through initiatives like the Chef Action Summit, is committed to ensuring they have the tools and training needed to drive change. We thank Houston First for being an incredible host and partner and look forward to presenting our policy recommendations in support of a more sustainable, equitable, and thriving food system in early spring."*

The second JBF Chef Action Summit will take place at three distinct Houston institutions: [The University of Houston Hilton Hotel and Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality](#), [POST Houston](#), as well as [The Power Center Houston](#).

The Summit, taking place just off the heels of the [10 year anniversary of the Foundation's groundbreaking Chef Bootcamp for Policy and Change](#), features refreshers on the program, as well as new training, including: updated tools for working with one's

JamesBeard Foundation

local representatives, as well as municipal and state lawmakers; advocacy training for social media strategies to move the needle in obstinate cities and states; tactics on fostering peer-to-peer support and networking; and deep-dive discussions around key sustainability issues.

*"What is taking place in Houston this January will impact everyone," said **Houston First Corporation** President and CEO [Michael Heckman](#). "Not only will the 2023 Chef Action Summit drive important policy discussions that will influence 2023 legislation, the contents of those conversations will directly affect how our food supply remains safe, abundant, and accessible to all. We applaud the James Beard Foundation for their continued commitment to addressing these difficult issues and look forward to hosting this influential group in Houston."*

The Chef Action Summit is by pre-registration only. Programming will begin on Sunday, January 29 at 4 p.m. at the University of Houston Hilton hotel. Later that evening, a special welcome reception for participants and speakers, hosted by Houston First Corporation, will happen on the rooftop of POST Houston, kicking-off the three-day series of events. Keynote panels, programming, and policy discussion will follow from January 30-31, with Chef Christopher Williams—a 2022 James Beard nominee for "Outstanding Restaurateur"—closing out the Summit with a special tour and lunch at The Power Center.

The second Chef Action Summit—part of the James Beard Foundation's advocacy programs—is hosted by the Houston First Corporation. Program sponsors include the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, Best Made, Deloitte, Distinguished Vineyards, TABASCO® Brand, Tequila Patrón, and YETI. The James Beard Foundation's programs are also supported by American Airlines, the official airline of the James Beard Foundation; Capital One, the official credit card and banking partner of the James Beard Foundation; and Windstar Cruises, the official cruise line of the James Beard Foundation.

To learn more about the discussions happening at the 2023 JBF Chef Action Summit in Houston or to obtain more details about the participants and speakers at the event, visit <https://www.jamesbeard.org/2023-chef-summit>.

About James Beard Foundation:

JamesBeard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation (JBF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that celebrates and supports the people behind America's food culture, while pushing for new standards in the restaurant industry to create a future where all have the opportunity to thrive. Established over 30 years ago, the Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives and is committed to supporting a resilient and flourishing industry that honors its diverse communities. By amplifying new voices, celebrating those leading the way, and supporting those on the path to do so, the Foundation is working to create a more equitable and sustainable future—what we call Good Food for Good®. JBF brings its mission to life through the annual Awards, industry and community-focused programs, advocacy, partnerships, and events across the country. Coming soon, for the first time in the Foundation's history, exceptional culinary talent, industry leaders, and visitors from NYC and beyond can experience unforgettable dining and educational programming at Pier 57—inspiring food and beverage devotees for decades to come. Learn more at jamesbeard.org, sign up for our newsletter, and follow @beardfoundation on social media.

About Houston First Corporation:

Houston First Corporation (HFC) is a local government corporation and the official destination marketing organization for the country's fourth largest city. In addition to serving as operator for the George R. Brown Convention Center and some of Houston's most prominent art, entertainment, and event venues, HFC is focused on promoting the city's vibrancy and rich tapestry of culture. By harnessing the city's collective energy, ambition, and creativity, including its diverse culinary scene, world-renowned performing arts, medical and space innovation, and elite filming locations, HFC is solidifying Houston as a premier national and global destination. For the latest news and info regarding HFC, visit www.houstonfirst.com.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS:

James Beard Foundation Agency of Record
MMGY Wagstaff
jbf@wagstaffmktg.com

JamesBeard Foundation

Jennie Bui-McCoy

PR Director, Houston First Corporation

PR@visithouston.com or Jennie.Bui-McCoy@HoustonFirst.com

713.853.8313 (o) or 832.567.3899 (m)