



****MEDIA ALERT****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION RELEASES WINTER 2021 SURVEY RESULTS ON HEALTH
OF THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY THIS SEASON**

Chef and restaurant owner survey respondents cite staffing, higher operational costs, and lower revenue as the top three challenges facing restaurants

NEW YORK, NY (December 8, 2021) – The James Beard Foundation unveils results from its Winter 2021 Survey, which polled their network of chefs and restaurant owners on the health of their business and the top challenges the restaurant industry is facing this winter. The survey also explores chefs and restaurateurs' thoughts regarding how their businesses could survive the winter season amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimate findings show that restaurants face a precarious future heading into the winter season. While many restaurants are more confident in their business's survivability than they were in 2020, independent restaurants nationwide are still at risk of closing.

Of those surveyed, 50 percent expressed no or moderate confidence they will make it through the winter. Further, survey data affirms the top three challenges currently facing restaurants: 78 percent reported staffing, 77 percent reported higher operational costs, and 58 percent reported lower revenue.

A substantial portion of those who reported higher operational costs and lower revenue cited supply chain disruptions as a major contributor to their business challenges. While of some concern, outdoor dining requirements and outdoor heating do not appear to be major challenges for most respondents. Sixty percent of respondents cited state and federal grants, loans and other relief programs – such as a replenishment of the Restaurant Revitalization Program, the Paycheck Protection Program, and Economic Injury Disaster (EIDL) grants and loans – would help them meet these challenges.

“COVID-19 has forever changed the restaurant industry,” says Anne McBride, PhD, Vice President of Programs for the James Beard Foundation. “Our survey results clearly show that restaurants will continue to face a myriad of hurdles for the foreseeable future. However, it is our hope that diners will take the necessary steps to continue to support suffering restaurants, further aiding in the U.S. restaurant industry recovery.”

Despite the many difficulties the industry is experiencing, there are several ways diners can continue to help restaurants stay afloat during these undoubtedly uncertain times. Restaurant-goers should continue to support independent restaurants through dining, take-out, delivery, and gift cards. Moreover, if a reservation is made, honor that reservation, or call if a cancellation is necessary, as reservation no-shows can significantly impact a restaurant's bottom line. The James Beard Foundation recommends diners be patient and tip appropriately as many restaurants are suffering from temporary service issues due to nation-wide staffing shortages. Finally, for those looking to gift from an independent restaurant this holiday season, the James Beard Foundation's

[Holiday Gift Guide](#) is a great resource to reference, as it showcases a multitude of chefs, bakers, and independent dining destinations across the country to support during the season of giving.

The two-week survey was conducted in November and December, with respondents representing businesses from 42 of 50 states, and the District of Columbia. Additionally, this study was largely conducted before the announcement of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

About the James Beard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation 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™. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the James Beard Foundation launched the Open for Good campaign to ensure that independent restaurants not only survive, but that the industry is able to rebuild stronger than before. For more information, subscribe to the digital newsletter Beard Bites and follow @beardfoundation on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and Clubhouse. The James Beard Foundation is a national not-for-profit 501c(3) organization based in New York City.

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