

# James Beard Foundation

## **The James Beard Foundation Charts Organization's Path to Support a More Equitable and Sustainable Food and Beverage Industry**

*Plans include new James Beard House model, updated Awards, new initiatives, and refined mission to help independent restaurants  
#OpenforGood*

**NEW YORK, NY (June 24, 2021) –**

Today the James Beard Foundation announces changes to existing programs, including an ongoing audit of the Awards, and the launch of new initiatives centered on the organization's mission to champion a more equitable and sustainable industry.

Over the past year, the independent restaurant industry and the entire food and beverage ecosystem have endured the impacts of COVID-19. The crisis brought on by the pandemic revealed economic vulnerabilities and inequities throughout the United States and within our industry. Through its Open for Good campaign, the Foundation has been working to help the independent restaurant industry survive the COVID-19 crisis and come back stronger, more equitable, and more resilient. As the restaurant community collectively seeks to create a more equitable and inclusive climate, the Foundation felt it was critical to take a step back and review its programs, procedures, and ethos as an organization and has made a number of adjustments to its internal practices and longstanding programs.

One of the results of this review is an update to the Foundation's mission: The James Beard Foundation is a nonprofit organization with a mission to celebrate, support, and elevate the people behind America's food culture and champion a standard of good food anchored in talent, equity, and sustainability.

Among the Foundation's changes:

### ***Human Resources***

The Foundation has made it a priority to evolve its own internal human resources practices. JBF is committed to diversifying its leadership team, providing resources and an open communication channel for its employees, and fostering an inclusive work environment for those striving to support its mission every day. Current projects include revising hiring practices

and increasing transparency in compensation, which will be completed by the end of the summer. The Foundation has identified specific goals and is continuing its commitment to these changes by working with diversity, equity, and inclusion experts to achieve them. Please find additional information on [the Foundation's DEI commitments here](#).

“A year ago we committed to looking at our internal practices and all of our programs through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and want to be open about where we are on the path,” said Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation. “We can only achieve our highest expressions of America’s food culture when everyone has a seat at the table—and the opportunity to thrive at all levels of our industry. I look forward to building upon these programs as this work continues.”

### ***The James Beard House***

The James Beard House has reopened with a pilot program training and supporting new culinary talent. For decades, cooking at the James Beard House has been an aspiration for many chefs and considered a milestone in one’s career. The [James Beard House Fellows](#) program re-visions the potential of this historic space as a hub of training and development for the next generation of industry leaders.

Fellows will receive a \$10,000 stipend each to enable their participation in the month-long program. They will gain critical skills and engage in various media opportunities to bring visibility to their work. The Foundation provides training in the following areas: publicity, media relations, networking, finance and business, advocacy education, social media, and developing culinary products.

The James Beard House Fellows pilot program launched in May 2021 in partnership with the [Food Education Fund \(FEF\)](#) and will continue through 2021. An [advisory board of industry leaders](#) was critical in shaping the program along with Foundation staff. Fellows are selected through an application process, and the pilot will be open to alumni of FEF’s New York–based [partner high schools](#). In collaboration with Great Performances, each Fellow will develop a Beard Box meal kit, available to consumers nationwide and marketed by the Foundation, with the majority of proceeds going to the Fellow to support their career growth. As this is a national program, future enrollment periods will be open to applicants from around the country.

### ***James Beard Awards***

The Foundation recognizes the leadership role that it plays in the restaurant industry through the James Beard Awards and other programs. As was announced in August 2020, the James Beard Awards are undergoing an audit of policies and procedures in order to ensure a more transparent and equitable process for the future. The areas of focus are a code of ethics, composition of committees and judges, criteria for winners, and developing policies and procedures for unforeseen events. The audit will be completed later this summer and a final report will be available on [jamesbeard.org](#).

In 2020, chef and restaurateur Tanya Holland joined the Foundation’s board of trustees and was named the chair of the James Beard Awards committee, the body that oversees governance of the James Beard Awards. Holland is well known for her contributions to the food and hospitality industry, from her books, *The Brown Sugar Kitchen Cookbook* and *New Soul Cooking*, to competing on the fifteenth season of *Top Chef*, to hosting *Tanya’s Kitchen Table* on OWN.

“I accepted the role of Chair of the James Beard Awards committee with the intention of bringing my expertise, my perspective as a Black female restaurateur, and my passion for and knowledge of creating inclusion in our food and beverage community,” said Holland. “I am honored to be part of what I believe can be an historical change and a true turning point in fostering a culture of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in our country’s restaurant industry.”

Earlier this year, the Foundation brought on Dawn Padmore to a newly created post, vice president of the James Beard Awards. Padmore joins the Foundation with extensive experience in culinary events—most recently leading production for the Harlem EatUp! festival. In this new role, Padmore will be shepherding the Foundation through the Awards audit and planning the next evolution of the Awards for 2022.

Holland and Padmore have been working with third-party consultants, the James Beard Awards committee, working groups comprised of Awards subcommittees, and Foundation staff to shape the future of the James Beard Awards.

“Our Awards program is, first and foremost, in service to the industries that it recognizes. We have been working diligently with our subcommittees, stakeholders, and external partners to thoughtfully create policies and procedures that will lay the groundwork for a more equitable Awards,” said Padmore. “We are making efforts to remove systemic biases, increase the diversity of our committees and voting body, and widen the net of potential awardees by aligning the Awards with the new mission and the Foundation’s values of equity, transparency, respect, integrity, community, and passion.”

The first post-audit James Beard Awards will take place in 2022. The 2021 ceremony will be a celebration of the independent restaurant community, honoring those who have made a significant impact on the industry and in their communities during this crisis. Details about this event, which will feature virtual and in-person elements, will be shared in July.

News about the Awards will be regularly updated and posted to [jamesbeard.org/awards](https://jamesbeard.org/awards) and on the Foundation’s social channels (@beardfoundation on Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #jbfa).

### ***Open for Good***

For more than a year, the Foundation has been dedicating its resources to help the independent restaurant industry survive the COVID-19 crisis as part of its [Open for Good](#) campaign. The next phase of the campaign will prioritize helping the food and beverage community rebuild stronger and more equitably in the wake of the pandemic. Open for Good has included an emergency relief fund that raised \$4.7 million, with funds distributed directly to 312 restaurants across the U.S. in April and May 2020; industry support resources including webinars, newsletters, and other resources to help the industry navigate the unique challenges of the pandemic; and educational and experiential events that engage consumers in supporting their local independent restaurants.

The [Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change](#), created in 2012, was the foundation for the organization’s [chef advocacy programs](#). During COVID-19, many of the program’s alumni and other industry leaders created the [Independent Restaurant Coalition \(IRC\)](#) with support from the James Beard Foundation. The IRC went on to help get the Restaurants Act passed in

Congress, and is currently lobbying for a bill to replenish the Restaurant Relief Fund in order to meet the immense need of independent restaurants around the country that, despite recent reopenings, are still struggling to recover from more than 15 months of business disruption due to the pandemic.

The Foundation continues to run the Chefs Boot Camp (currently remote), and other signature programs including [Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership](#). The organization will revitalize its sustainability programs including Smart Catch and other initiatives in the coming year.

The Open for Good campaign also includes a number of new initiatives aimed at creating a stronger and more equitable future, including the following:

### ***Original Research***

The Foundation is commissioning several pieces of original research, including a project examining the state of racial equity in the food and beverage industry. The findings of this research will be shared in a public report in Fall 2021. This research will help set a benchmark from which the broader food and beverage industry can make progress and will also inform the Foundation's programs addressing systemic inequities in the industry.

"We're thrilled to be in discussions with [Race Forward](#) on this original research," said Colleen Vincent, vice president of community at the James Beard Foundation. "Our commitment to creating more inclusion in our industry requires that we understand the current challenges and opportunities for improvement. This research creates a solid foundation from which we can all hold ourselves accountable."

The Foundation has commissioned research on women-led businesses with Dr. Deborah Harris of Texas State University, complemented by a benchmark study by Dr. Lilly Jan of Cornell University to investigate the impediments to career advancement for women in the industry.

In addition, the Foundation is embarking on industry research and consultation around the current and future economic model of restaurants, with studies that are exploring different revenue and cost drivers, new practices adopted during the pandemic, and innovations needed for a business model to accommodate the cost of equitable and sustainable practices.

These research projects are due to conclude in Fall 2021 and the results will be available on [jamesbeard.org](http://jamesbeard.org).

### ***Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans***

In acknowledgement of the immeasurable contributions that Black and Indigenous communities have made to the modern American foodscape, the Foundation launched the James Beard Foundation Food and Beverage Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans, an ongoing fund to provide financial resources for food or beverage businesses that are majority-owned by Black or Indigenous individuals. To date, 37 businesses across the country have received grants of \$15,000 each. Learn more about the Investment Fund and our grantees [here](#). The Foundation continues to raise and disburse funds for these grants.

## ***Legacy Network***

The James Beard Foundation Legacy Network launched in Spring 2021 to train emerging leaders across the culinary industry and connect them with future generations of excellence. By developing and cultivating the capabilities among these influential professionals, the Legacy Network advances the equitable, culturally relevant leadership required to strengthen the industry. Each mentee, under the guidance of Legacy mentors, becomes part of a powerful network that centers the professional growth of previously under-resourced communities. The Legacy Network ensures their career paths are diverse, equitable, and sustainable.

The application period for the first cohort was in May 2021 and was open to Black and Indigenous professionals. The first group of Legacy Network mentors and mentees will be announced this summer. For additional information on the James Beard Foundation's Legacy Network, program timeline, and application assets please visit [here](#).

## **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](#), and [TikTok](#). The James Beard Foundation is a national not-for-profit 501c(3) organization based in New York City.

###

## **Media Contact**

Magrino PR

[JamesBeard@magrinopr.com](mailto:JamesBeard@magrinopr.com)