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JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION FOOD AND BEVERAGE INVESTMENT FUND FOR BLACK AND INDIGENOUS AMERICANS

NEW YORK, NY (September 14, 2020) – In acknowledgement of the immeasurable contributions the Black and Indigenous communities have made to the modern American foodscape, the James Beard Foundation announced today the James Beard Foundation Food and Beverage Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans, a new grant initiative to provide financial resources for food or beverage businesses that are majority-owned by Black or Indigenous individuals. The initiative is a component of the organization’s [Open For Good](#) campaign launched in April to rebuild an independent restaurant industry that is stronger, more equitable, more sustainable, and more resilient post-pandemic.

“The new Fund is part of the Foundation’s ongoing commitment to continually lift up the Black and Indigenous business owners in its industry, not just in light of the pandemic, but for good,” said James Beard Foundation vice president of community Colleen Vincent. “Financial resource is that much more impactful when coupled with support from organizations and experts who make themselves available to provide guidance on professional skills like marketing, structuring business plans, and negotiating contracts. The Foundation is creating new partnerships to deliver this value to its grant recipients in an effort to see these businesses thrive for the long term.”

In order to properly appreciate the contributions of Black and Indigenous Americans to the nation’s food culture, the efforts of all types of food and beverage businesses, not just those that have been acknowledged at the James Beard Awards, must be recognized. Food trucks, pop-up supper clubs, fast-casual restaurants, and brewpubs are all a part of the unique culinary fabric of this country. With this new Fund, the Foundation aims to support and encourage businesses of all forms that help to make American food delicious and diverse.

The Fund aims to disburse grants equally across Black and Indigenous populations throughout the United States. Using the most recent census data, six regions of the country have been delineated, each containing 16-17% of the total Black and Indigenous population in the U.S.

To help guide the development of criteria, craft partnerships to deliver non-financial resources to grantees, and to support the promotion of application cycles, the Foundation created the JBF Fund Leadership Committee. Founding committee members include:

- **Bleu Adams, IndigeHub, and JBF Women’s Entrepreneurial Leadership Program Fellow**

- **Cheryl Day, Baker and Author, Back in the Day Bakery, JBF Food and Beverage Industry Relief Fund Grantee**
- **Carla Hall, Celebrity Chef and Cookbook Author**
- **Raymond P. Lewis, President, RPL Consulting, LLC (Events Marketing, Public, Community Relations Firm)**
- **Zella Palmer, Chair, Dillard University Ray Charles Program in African-American Material Culture**
- **Michael E. Roberts, President and CEO, First Nations Development Institute**
- **Sean Sherman, Chef, Author, and Activist, The Sioux Chef, and JBF Leadership Award Honoree**
- **Dana Thompson, Co-Owner and Activist, The Sioux Chef, Executive Director, North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems**
- **Heather Dawn Thompson, Principal, Native American Capital**

A complete outline of criteria, regions, and categories is listed below. The Fund is launching with support from the Willamette Valley Wineries Association, who contributed \$100,000 in proceeds from their annual Pinot Noir Auction which took place on August 13, 2020. The Fund will also be the beneficiary of proceeds from the “HEARD Initiative” bracelet created by chef Ming Tsai and chef George Mandakas of Chef Metal Jewelry (chefmetal.com). Donations to the Fund can be made at members.jamesbeard.org/jbf-investment-fund or by contacting grants@jamesbeard.org.

Please visit jamesbeard.org/investment-fund for all announcements of criteria and timing of application windows.

CRITERIA is defined as:

To qualify for funding, a food or beverage business must be (i) independently owned with 50 or fewer full- or part-time employees as of February 15, 2020, or (ii) a restaurant group in which each member restaurant had 50 or fewer full-or part-time employees on that date, and (iii) is at least 51% owned by Black and/or Indigenous American(s). We define independently owned as food businesses that maintain full control of their business or group of businesses and do not have an affiliation with a parent company with different owners and/or operators; therefore, franchises are not eligible for this funding.

The Foundation will announce an application window once we have raised sufficient funding to cover a round of grants. The Foundation will announce the window and publish the application in advance and will disseminate this information across all of its owned channels. The application process will consist of a form that will gather necessary information for determining an applicant’s eligibility. A list of information that will be required in the application will be published in advance so that applicants have ample time to compile the necessary documentation. Each application window will remain open for 10 business days. Funds will then be disbursed to approved grantees within 15 business days following the closing of an application window. Approved applicants will receive an email communication to confirm the distribution timeline and process.

Unless otherwise restricted, all donations are received by the Fund and will be divided evenly across the six regions outlined below. The Fund will award an equal number of recipients in each region according to the three categories of business types outlined below. Donors who wish to make restricted contributions may restrict their gift to one or more of the six regions but cannot earmark specific states or types of food and beverage businesses for their contribution.

REGIONS are defined as:

- Region 1: CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT, Washington, D.C., WV
- Region 2: IA, IL, IN, KY, MI, OH, PA
- Region 3: AL, AR, FL, MO, MS, OK
- Region 4: GA, NC, TN, SC,
- Region 5: AZ, CO, KS, LA, NM, NV, Puerto Rico, TX, UT
- Region 6: AK, CA, HI, ID, MI, MN, MT, ND, NE, OR, SD, WA, WI, WY

Completed applications in each of the categories listed below within each region will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. Each applicant (whether an independent restaurant or one location from within a restaurant group) approved by the Fund shall receive a one-time payment of \$15,000. The Foundation recommends that grantees check with their tax professional, but the funding is designed to be a non-taxable charitable grant to those with critical financial need. Applications received for a specific round of funding will only be eligible for that round of funding and applicants will need to apply again for future rounds of funding. Applicants who receive a grant in any round of funding will not be eligible for future rounds of funding.

The Fund will make an equal number of grants across three categories of food and beverage businesses.

CATEGORIES are defined as:

- Category 1:
 - Food and beverage businesses without a standalone brick-and-mortar footprint (food trucks, food stalls, supper clubs, food and beverage consultants)
- Category 2:
 - Brick-and-mortar food and beverage businesses without seated table-side service (fast casual restaurant, counter service restaurant or cafe, bakeries, distillery, etc.)
- Category 3:
 - Brick-and-mortar food and beverage businesses with seated table-side service (full-service restaurant, brewpub, or speakeasy with full menu)

The Fund retains the right to make final funding decisions, in its sole discretion, consistent with the applicable criteria, which the Fund may amend as needed to ensure smooth operations. In addition, the Fund, in making these charitable grants, wants to promote a safe, fair, and respectful workplace. Any restaurant that does not provide a workplace consistent with these values will be disqualified from receiving a grant from the Fund. The Fund retains the right to reclassify an applicant to the appropriate category as needed.

The JBF Food and Beverage Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans is administered by New Venture Fund on behalf of the James Beard Foundation.

About the James Beard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation promotes Good Food For Good™. For more than 30 years, the James Beard Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives. Through the variety of [industry programs](#) that educate and empower leaders in our community, the Foundation has asserted the power of food to drive behavior, culture, and policy change. The organization is committed to giving chefs a voice and the tools they need to make the world more sustainable, equitable, and delicious for everyone. 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 501©(3) organization based in New York City.

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