



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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**Ohio Restaurant Association Seeks to Raise \$30,000
for Employee Relief Fund in 30 Days**

Money raised will assist displaced restaurant employees struggling to meet financial needs

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Launched in April, the [Ohio Restaurant Employee Relief Fund](#) was created by the Ohio Restaurant Association Education Foundation, a 501(c)(3), in collaboration with the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA), to activate emergency funding for personnel in the foodservice industry who have been affected by COVID-19. As the pandemic’s impact on the industry continues to worsen and thousands of workers furloughed, the Ohio Restaurant Association Education Foundation and ORA have set a goal to raise \$30,000 in 30 days to support struggling employees.

“The most recent ORA data confirms the COVID-19 economic impact on Ohio’s restaurants continues to be severe, with 54% of owners/operators reporting that they will be forced to close in the next nine months if they remain at their current capacity,” said John Barker, president and CEO of the ORA. “With sales continuously down month-after-month across the industry in most sectors, employees need assistance now more than ever. We must all work together to support those who have served us for years and help make Ohio’s restaurant, foodservice and hospitality industry vibrant again.”

Barker said they have received many thank you letters from workers who have received grants made possible by the Employee Relief Fund expressing their gratitude, including:

- *“I am so thankful for the grant I received from the Ohio Restaurant Association. It came at a much-needed time, as I ended up having surgery right before my restaurant’s reopening! It really helped me to get caught up on bills and get some much-needed essential items for my daughter and myself. Receiving this grant made me so proud to be part of the industry and made me feel like I was being rewarded for many years of hard work!!”*
- *“I would like to thank you, and all involved with the Ohio Restaurant Association. I received a check in the mail today with much surprise and much appreciated. It truly has been a struggle not working. I have been unable to receive unemployment due to not being qualified. So please know that this is a blessing and will help so much with current bills due and food. So once again thank you for what you are doing to help us during this time of distress.”*

From now through mid-September, the Ohio Restaurant Association Education Foundation and ORA are calling on Ohioans across the state to help reach a fundraising goal of an additional \$30,000 to help hundreds of their neighbors in need.

Ways Ohioans Can Help

The organizations are proud to be partnering with culinary nutrition expert, chef, integrative health coach and healthy eating blogger, Monique Costello, and professional mixologist and founder of Bubbles and Agave, Christina Basham, for a virtual cooking lesson where they will teach participants how to make Sorghum and Veggie Buddha Bowls with Paprika Tahini and Casa Luna Lowball cocktails. Costello and Basham will donate 100 percent of ticket proceeds and tips from the event to support the Ohio Restaurant Employee Relief Fund.

"Food creates and deepens connections with family and friends," shared Costello. "Our food community needs our support. I'm honored and humbled to work together with the Ohio Restaurant Association to help provide relief for the nearly 600,000 Ohio employees affected. Let's reconnect and strengthen the restaurant community together."

Learn more about the talented recipe creators on their websites, moniquecostello.com and bubblesandagave.com, and register to participate in the event at ohiorestaurant.org/events.

Additional opportunities to support the Employee Relief Fund include the following:

- **Order Perseverance beer.** ORA collaborated with eight breweries in central Ohio to launch "Perseverance," a new brew that is unique in flavor and profile at each participating location, with a portion of the proceeds directly benefitting the Ohio Restaurant Employee Relief Fund. Find the list of participating breweries [here](#). Visit their individual websites for carryout and delivery options that may be available at each location.
- **Donate directly online.** Direct donations to the fund can be given at OhioRestaurantsRelief.org. All donations are tax-deductible and 100% of the funds will go directly to support displaced workers who are struggling with meeting their daily financial needs.



How the Employee Relief Fund Works

Any Ohio employees in the restaurant, foodservice or hospitality industry that have been impacted by COVID-19 are eligible to apply for a grant from the Employee Relief Fund. Funding is restricted for the

use of housing expenses (e.g. mortgage or rent), living expenses (e.g. transportation and groceries), and medical expenses.

Applicants will need to prove their previous or current employment and fill out the application at OhioRestaurantsRelief.org to be considered. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and relief efforts will be based on need and funding available. Aid will be made as a single disbursement and may take up to four weeks to process.

Donors and applicants can contact relief@ohioresetaurant.org with any questions.

About Ohio Restaurant Association Education Foundation:

The Ohio Restaurant Association Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and its mission is to educate, cultivate and support the Ohio restaurant, hospitality and foodservice workforce. All donations are tax-deductible. Please consult a tax professional for deduction information.

About Ohio Restaurant Association:

For 100 years, the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) has proudly served Ohio's restaurant and foodservice industry, with their members always being their number one priority. Founded on thought leadership and focused on finding sound business solutions for their members, ORA offers advocacy and education, events and programs. For more information, visit ohiorestaurant.org.

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