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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, TASKFORCE ON RACIAL INCLUSION AND EQUITY, AND
ONE FAIR WAGE AWARD \$2.3 MILLION TO RESTAURANTS THROUGH
RESTAURANT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM**

The City and One Fair Wage have awarded funding to nearly 100 restaurants committing to provide nearly 87,000 free meals to residents hard-hit by COVID-19

NEW YORK—Today, Mayor de Blasio, Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity co-chairs First Lady Chirlane McCray, Deputy Mayor J. Phillip Thompson, Deputy Mayor Dr. Raul Perea-Henze, and Executive Director Sideya Sherman, and One Fair Wage announced nearly 100 restaurants were collectively awarded \$2.3 million through the Restaurant Revitalization Program to support the economic wellbeing of their workers and to make their meals accessible to vulnerable New Yorkers.

“Restaurants are the heart and soul of our city and we will do everything we can to protect the culture and identity that they create across neighborhoods,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “The Restaurant Revitalization Program will move us forward in our fight for fair recovery and deliver economic relief to people who need it most.”

“The Restaurant Revitalization Program is a reminder of what can be achieved when the public and private sector come together to help strengthen communities by addressing inequity with reforms and bolstering struggling businesses,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “This initiative will help restaurants get back on their feet, and preserve the culture and warm, personal connection these familiar spaces provide in our neighborhoods.”

The Taskforce brings an equity-based approach to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and has announced 10 initiatives over the last three months. Services aim to address the specific challenges of New Yorkers in communities of color, where COVID-19 has exacerbated existing disparities. The City conducted a survey with more than 300 community members during the Spring and this feedback helped guide the Taskforce's work.

The Taskforce announced the Restaurant Revitalization (RR) program in June, in partnership with One Fair Wage and with support from the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. The program supports unemployed and underemployed restaurant workers affected by the pandemic and their employers, with a focus on communities hardest-hit by COVID-19. More specifically, over 900 employees will receive critical financial support through the program. Participating restaurants have committed to paying a full minimum wage in addition to tips over the next 3-5 years, promoting race and gender equity, and providing free meals to vulnerable community members, including those who are food insecure, essential workers, or others who are facing challenges in a time of need. Many restaurants have also committed to making more permanent changes as they recover like training for staff on workers' rights laws, supporting staff in improving financial awareness and empowerment, and cross-training employees to introduce them to new skills.

How it works

The program provides restaurants with short term payroll support, funding subsidized wages to employ displaced restaurant workers who will prepare meals (including some free) for their communities. Under the Restaurant Revitalization Program, participating restaurants are eligible for funding up to \$30,000 each, to be used to pay wages of \$20/hour to subsidized employees for at least six weeks. In addition the City is collaborating with One Fair Wage (OFW) – a nationally recognized advocacy organization working to raise the standards and equity across the restaurant industry – which launched its High Road Kitchens program in New York City, making \$1 million available to support local restaurants with funding of up to \$35,000 per restaurant.

Collectively, the City and OFW will direct \$3 Million into hardest-hit communities to support over 100 restaurants across the five boroughs. The Restaurant Revitalization Program is implemented by NYC Opportunity and the Human Resources Administration, with support from the Mayor’s Fund to Advance NYC and the partnership of One Fair Wage.

"Our beloved local businesses and restaurant workers in communities across the five boroughs have been among the groups hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic," said **Toya Williford, Executive Director of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City**. "This partnership-- which is getting people back to work and nourishing communities, all while raising standards across the restaurant industry--is a prime example of the business and nonprofit communities working in collaboration with local government to make our city a stronger, more equitable place."

"An equitable recovery will require new ways of doing business, and these restaurants -- by providing free meals in their communities and by committing to raise wages so all staff earn a \$15 minimum wage with tips on top -- are leading the way," said **Matthew Klein, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity**. "We are proud to recognize and support these restaurants and their workers along with our partners HRA, the Mayor's Fund, One Fair Wage and the James Beard Foundation."

"This innovative program exemplifies our commitment to serving and supporting the communities and individuals in our City hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic," said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. "All told, this investment goes far beyond directing critical assistance to restaurants – we are putting resources directly in the hands of small businesses that are the backbones of their communities, resulting in local job growth and the creation of neighborhood hubs where New Yorkers experiencing food insecurities can access critical food services."

"Restaurants are the lifeblood of neighborhoods across the five boroughs and the Restaurant Revitalization Program provides an invaluable assistance helping this vital sector recover and grow with a focus on inclusion and equity for all stakeholders involved," said **Interim HRA Administrator Gary Jenkins**. "HRA is proud to administer this program, and we look forward to continuing to work with all of our partners to ensure our vibrant restaurant industry experiences an equally vibrant recovery that can serve as a national model in these unprecedented times."

"It is critical that New York invest in a holistic strategy for the recovery of our restaurant industry and the economic prosperity of the workers behind it. I am grateful to the restaurant owners, particularly those serving the Bronx, who have committed to building a future for their employees that is equitable and just. I commend the Mayor's Office and One Fair Wage for bringing these worker-centered programs to fruition. I am proud to stand with New York's restaurant owners and employees in the fight to end the subminimum wage for tipped restaurant

workers, and will continue to push my legislation forward to make one fair wage a reality statewide," said **State Senator Alessandra Biaggi**.

"The inequities in New York City have been laid bare and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and restaurants and restaurant workers are struggling. We should have already been given billions of dollars in additional relief funding by the federal government, but in the absence of leadership under the Trump administration, it's imperative that New York State and New York City step up. We need to pass real commercial rent relief at the state level, including our Save Our Storefronts bill, and we need every New Yorker to be earning a fair wage. I support the Restaurant Revitalization program because fair wages for restaurant workers are a matter of race, gender, and economic justice--and essential to New York City's comeback," said **State Senator Brad Hoylman**.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a drastic impact on the restaurant industry, its workers, and their families. As we re-imagine New York post-pandemic, we must commit to new initiatives to keep our restaurant workers employed and secure their fair wages as they experience unprecedented unemployment rates and economic insecurity. The Restaurant Revitalization program will revitalize struggling restaurants, employ hundreds of displaced workers, and support the hardest-hit communities like mine in the South Bronx by providing free meals to our community members who are facing difficult challenges in the wake of the pandemic," said **State Senator Luis R. Sepúlveda**.

"The Restaurant Revitalization and One Fair Wage funding for restaurants committed to paying their employees the full minimum wage is an important step in the direction of true economic recovery. We have to build back better than before, and the City's initiative does just that. I hope many restaurants in my district will consider taking advantage of this program. OFW and the City are moving us toward justice with these initiatives, and I look forward to doing the same at the State level soon by eliminating the sub-minimum wage altogether," said **State Senator Robert Jackson**.

"The Restaurant Revitalization and One Fair Wage programs will ensure that restaurants, restaurant workers and vulnerable communities get the help they need now. Through diversity and fair wages in restaurants, these initiatives will help New York come back stronger than ever. I commend the City and One Fair Wage for their commitment to diversity, equality, fair wages and providing assistance to New York's most vulnerable," said **Felix W. Ortiz, Assistant Speaker of the New York State Assembly**.

"The Restaurant Revitalization program will not only help restaurant workers who have been displaced by the pandemic to earn wages again, it will also help these workers to finally earn a fair living wage in careers that traditionally depended on unreliable tipping. The program will also help to feed people in communities suffering from food insecurity. Many of my constituents in the 42nd Assembly District will benefit from this program. I thank the Mayor, First Lady, Deputy Mayors and Executive Director Sherman for advancing it," said **Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte**.

"I applaud the City of NY for implementing the Restaurant Revitalization program which will help workers, support small businesses and feed hungry New Yorkers. As we navigate these unprecedented times, we must continue to find creative solutions to our most pressing concerns. This program demonstrates how strategic partnerships can leverage community resources while supporting those most in need," said **Assemblymember Mathylde Frontus**.

"The COVID pandemic has increased food insecurity and had a devastating economic impact on New York City's restaurant industry. Restaurants plays a vital role in our city's economic and

cultural life, employing about 315,000 workers at the pandemic's outset and a world-renowned symbol of our diversity. The Restaurant Revitalization program will help support New York's hard-hit restaurant workers and support communities in need around the city," said **Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried**.

"As an early advocate of outdoor dining, I'm excited to see its continued success. This is a program that works for our bars and restaurants and for New Yorkers, and one we should continue to expand. We must take this time to reimagine our streets to make them work better for all New Yorkers," said **Council Member Keith Powers**.

"We are delighted to join the Mayor's Office and James Beard Foundation in honoring restaurants that are willing to reimagine the restaurant industry post-pandemic," said **Saru Jayaraman, President of One Fair Wage**. "We are thrilled to come together as workers and employers to save our industry and its workforce - and demand that Gov Cuomo end the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers- a literal legacy of slavery - once and for all."

"It's amazing to be included in the Restaurant Revitalization and High Road Kitchens programs. At The Queensboro, we care deeply about our community, and about the hospitality professionals who make the restaurant industry so vibrant. Queens, in particular, is a special place and we're thrilled that the Mayor's office and One Fair Wage have given us an opportunity to offer free meals to our neighbors who are in need. This crisis has also offered us a chance to reset, and to reimagine our practices. All of us can now see that the wage disparity between front and back of house is inequitable and unfair. If we try to fix this on our own, we will be at a competitive disadvantage. We're committing to scaling up to One Fair Wage, because it's the right thing to do. However, if the Governor believes in New York's hospitality professionals the way I do, he'll help all of them by mandating One Fair Wage and allowing tips to be shared with the back of the house," said **Michael Fuquay, owner of The Queensboro**.

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