

AT THE BAR WITH BOWDITCH

A Legal Blog for the Craft Brewing Community

What You Should Know About the Restaurant Revitalization Fund

BY BOWDITCH & DEWEY • MAY 13, 2021

Established when Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and administered by the Small Business Association (the SBA), the $28.6 billion Restaurant Revitalization Fund (the Fund) was created to help restaurants, bars, and other businesses weather the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 3rd, the SBA began accepting applications from businesses seeking financial assistance. Two days later, it was reported that roughly 186,000 businesses had applied, and on May 10th the SBA announced that it already planned to send $2 billion to 16,000 establishments across the country, raising concerns that the Fund could soon run out of money.

WHAT ESTABLISHMENTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

As industry advocates work to convince lawmakers to increase the size of the Fund, eligible establishments can and should apply for assistance immediately. Eligibility is not limited to restaurants and bars. Brewpubs, tasting rooms, taprooms, breweries, and other facilities of a beverage alcohol producer may be eligible for assistance if they have experienced pandemic-related revenue loss. Establishments may receive up to $5 million per location, but an applicant and an affiliated business cannot receive more than a total of $10 million. The minimum award is $1,000.

WHAT ESTABLISHMENTS ARE BEING PRIORITIZED?

Currently, the SBA is giving priority to applications from establishments that are owned by women, veterans, or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. However, any eligible establishment can submit an application. On May 24th, the prioritization period will end, and the SBA will begin to process and fund applications from all eligible establishments in the order in which the applications were approved.

In addition to prioritizing certain establishments based on ownership, portions of the Fund have been reserved for establishments based on their size. The SBA has set aside $5 billion for applicants with 2019 gross receipts of not more than $500,000; $4 billion for applicants with 2019 gross receipts between $500,001 and $1,500,000; and $500 million for applicants with 2019 gross receipts of not more than $50,000.

©2026 Bowditch & Dewey LLP. All Rights Reserved.

WHAT CAN THE FUNDS BE USED FOR?

Awardees can use money from the Fund on eligible expenses so long as the expenses were incurred on or after February 15, 2020 and before March 11, 2023. Eligible expenses include payroll costs, payments on a mortgage obligation, rent payments, debt service, utility payments, maintenance expenses, construction of outdoor seating, supplies, food and beverage expenses (including raw materials), covered supplier costs, and business operating expenses. Any money received but not used to pay an eligible expense by March 11, 2023 must be returned to the SBA.

Applicants can apply either directly through the SBA or through an SBA-recognized Point of Sale vendor including Square, Toast, Clover, NCR Corporation (Aloha), and Oracle.

©2026 Bowditch & Dewey LLP. All Rights Reserved.