



## RESTAURANT WORKERS' COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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The Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation Racial Justice Fund  
March 2, 2021

### I. Introduction

Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation fights to create an equitable hospitality industry in the United States, with respect to four specific subject areas:

1. wage fairness and career ladders,
2. gender equity and sexual violence,
3. mental health and substance abuse, and
4. racial justice and support for the immigrant community.

But it can't accomplish its ends without addressing the specific injustices faced by Black, indigenous, and other workers of color.

Workers of color commonly receive fewer/lower hours, wages, and tips than their white colleagues, and are passed over for career opportunities far more often; the people most likely to experience discrimination, harassment, and violence on the job, from coworkers as well as customers, are women and femmes of color; these inequities contribute to people of color in the industry reporting higher rates of mental illness and substance abuse than their white counterparts.

The hospitality industry cannot become more just unless the white supremacy and anti-Blackness that animate it are rooted out. RWCF's Racial Justice Fund exists to do just that.

Under the guidance of a Steering Committee composed of BIPOC hospitality professionals and industry activists, the Racial Justice Fund will partner with organizations already working on issues of racial injustice and labor rights to devise and fund new initiatives, whose aims will be to combat the seemingly-intractable problems faced by racial and ethnic minorities in the hospitality industry.

### II. Goals, Responsibilities, and Powers

We envision a racially-just hospitality industry to be one in which:

1. people of color receive pay commensurate with their abilities, and even the lowest wages are enough to live on before overtime and gratuities;
2. marginalized people receive credit for their contributions, and sufficient, supported opportunities to grow, expand, and exercise their expertise;

3. worker safety is prioritized, and clear, compassionate pathways to restoration are available in the event that harm is done;
4. workers receive sufficient support and resources for the maintenance of their mental and physical health; and
5. people of color making a living through food can do so regardless of the whims and trends of the industry at large, which, as it stands, is biased toward white tastes.

Although its exclusive focus will be racial justice, the Racial Justice Fund will venture to create this industry through some of the same means employed by RWCF on the whole—namely, community building/advocacy, and grantmaking.

RJF will be seeded with \$100,000 from RWCF's 2020 operating budget. Of that initial investment, a portion (\$25,000) will be requisitioned for the six-month salary of a half-time Fund Director with a background of lived experience, who will be hired by a subcommittee of RWCF Board members to organize and lead a Steering Committee in the administration of the fund.

The majority of the fund's budget, including the remaining \$75,000 from the initial investment, will be distributed as grants to:

1. organizations already working on issues of racial justice in the industry, to pilot new initiatives to that end;
2. organizations working on racial justice issues outside of the industry, or hospitality issues outside of racial justice, to create new hospitality-focused racial justice initiatives; and, potentially,
3. other programs envisioned by the fund's managers and Steering Committee, so long as they are in alignment with RWCF and RJF goals, as defined in this document.

Aside from grants, RJF will also give its time to these organizations: before any funds are disbursed, RJF's managers and Steering Committee will collaborate with potential grantees to plan projects they may later choose to support. If, by the end of the planning period, the Steering Committee and nonprofit partner determine that the collaboration is a good fit for both guarantee and guarantor, then a grant will be made to launch the project.

As much as possible, RJF's managers will work to connect the field of organizations, activists, media professionals, and funders working on racial justice issues within the hospitality industry, and empower them to do their work. They will also seek to form partnerships outside of this industry to create solidarity with others working in parallel movements for labor rights and racial justice in the United States—especially those working to expand the rights of immigrants and undocumented people, whose wellbeing is of great relevance to RJF's mission.

### III. Organization

The Racial Justice Fund will be sustained through RWCF's fundraising activities. Ten percent of funds raised on behalf of RJF will go toward RWCF operating expenses.

RJF's Steering Committee will be composed of five-to-ten members who will meet at least quarterly and be organized by a Fund Director, who will handle daily operations. The Director will begin at half-time and be paid \$50,000/year, increasing to \$100,000/year when they begin full-time work.

Each member of the Steering Committee should have a demonstrated history of work on racial justice activism, labor activism, and/or nonprofit management, and will be able to draw on lived experience as a

member of a minority racial or ethnic group. Each member will serve a year-long, renewable term and be paid an honorarium for their services, amounting to \$1,200/year (\$600 at the beginning of each year, and \$600 at the end, upon satisfactory completion of their duties). Fees and staff wages will be paid from RWCF's operating budget.

The Steering Committee members will be recruited by RJF's managers, and RWCF's Board Task Force on Racial Justice. The Task Force will continue to serve in an advisory capacity, and, along with RWCF's Grantmaking Committee, help to inform the Steering Committee's decision-making. While the Steering Committee will have authority over RJF's activities, they will do so with accountability to the RWCF Board in general, and to this document specifically.

#### IV. Statement on Amendment

This document serves as the framework for the RWCF Racial Justice Fund. It is the sum total of the Board Task Force's goals and aspirations for the fund, and of their current interpretation of best practices. However, the Task Force, the fund's managers, and its Steering Committee will remain committed to hearing and integrating feedback on their work, and will make regular updates to their plans—and to this document—in diligent effort to better serve their community.