

Restaurant and Chef *Awards*

[SUBMIT A RECOMMENDATION HERE](#)

Entry Deadline:

11.29.2024

11:59 P.M. Eastern Time

Rules of Eligibility

Anyone can submit a chef or restaurant for consideration during the online open call for recommendations from October 1 through November 29, 2024. There is no entry fee for Restaurant and Chef categories.

Basic eligibility for restaurants:

Candidates for restaurant awards must be establishments (restaurants, pop-ups, or food trucks) that serve food and are open to the public. Businesses must be reasonably accessible to the public and be open for business (or accept and fill orders) a minimum of twice a month.

Basic eligibility for individuals:

Candidates for individual awards must be actively making food or beverage that is available to the public.

Only one recommendation is necessary for each individual or restaurant that you suggest.

The number of recommendations submitted for each individual or restaurant is not taken into consideration.

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Affiliation with the James Beard Foundation:

There is no membership requirement or expectation that semifinalists, nominees, or winners have participated in any James Beard Foundation programs, previously cooked at or provided a service to the James Beard Foundation or James Beard Foundation events, or raised money for the James Beard Foundation.

Previous winners:

No Restaurant and Chef Award winner may be placed on the ballot in the same category for five years after winning. The ineligibility period begins the year after the award was presented. Restaurant and Chef Award winners remain eligible in categories they have not won.

Restaurant recommendations:

A restaurant can only be a candidate in one restaurant award category per award year: Outstanding Restaurant, Outstanding Wine and Other Beverages Program, Outstanding Hospitality, Outstanding Bakery, Outstanding Bar, Best New Bar, or Best New Restaurant. Please submit your recommendation for the one category you believe is the best fit. The Restaurant and Chef committee reserves the right to reassign any candidate to a more appropriate category.

Individual recommendations:

An individual can only be a candidate for one category per award year: Outstanding Chef, Emerging Chef, Best Regional Chef, Outstanding Pastry Chef or Baker, Outstanding Restaurateur, Outstanding Professional in Beverage Service, or Outstanding Professional in Cocktail Service. Please submit your recommendation for the one category you believe is the best fit. The Restaurant and Chef committee reserves the right to reassign any candidate to a more appropriate category.

Restaurant and individual overlaps:

A restaurant and its team members cannot be candidates in both restaurant and individual categories in the same year. However, a restaurant's chef, pastry chef, and/or beverage service and/or cocktail professional can be nominated in the same year.

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Time Eligibility

The eligibility timeframe for the Restaurant and Chef Awards program is from October 1 to September 30. For the **2025** Restaurant and Chef Awards, the eligibility timeframe will be **October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024**.

- New businesses opening after September 30, 2024 will be eligible for the 2026 Restaurant and Chef Awards.
- For all awards that require years in service, **one year is counted October 1 through September 30**. Any time closed during the pandemic will not be deducted from a candidate's total years in service. Eligibility can be determined by counting back from September 30, 2024. For example:
 - To be eligible for the Outstanding Restaurateur Award for the 2025 Awards, restaurateurs will need to have been in the business since at least September 30, 2017 (seven years in business).
 - To be eligible for a Best Chef Award for the 2025 Awards, chefs must have been working in the region since September 30, 2021 (three years working in the region).
- **As of the 2025 cycle, the following categories have increased years in service requirements:** **Years in service requirements were reduced as of the 2022 cycle, to address the impact of COVID-19 on the industry.*
 - Outstanding Chef: Eligible candidates must have been working as a chef for 5 or more consecutive years.
 - Outstanding Hospitality: Eligible candidates must have been in operation for 5 or more years.
 - Outstanding Pastry Chef or Baker: Eligible candidates must have been working as a pastry chef or chef who makes desserts or breads for the past 5 years.
 - Outstanding Restaurateur: Eligible candidates must have been in the restaurant business for at least 7 years.

Representation of the Values of JBF

Allegations of criminal, unethical behavior, or behavior determined to be detrimental or contrary to the integrity and mission of the Awards may be cause for disqualification and removal from the nominating ballot or final ballot.

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Impact Statement

The James Beard Awards® honor those who are creating exceptional food, food media content, and better food systems while also demonstrating a commitment to equity, community, sustainability, and a culture where all can thrive.

The application process requires a short statement describing the impact of the restaurant or chef and how their work aligns with the Foundation's **values**: equity, transparency, respect, integrity, and community. This is our chance to learn a little more about the chef or restaurant.

If you are submitting for yourself, please write or speak in the first-person. If you are submitting on behalf of someone else, please be specific and use clear, pertinent examples when possible.

Statements can be submitted in the following formats:

- Written (150 to 300 words)
- Audio (1-2 minutes)
- Video (1-2 minutes)

Questions to consider as you compose your statement:

- What values inform how the chef/restaurant treats its staff?
- What is this chef/restaurant's culinary philosophy?
- How does this chef/restaurant promote or demonstrate equity, respect, community, and/or passion?
- What is inspiring about the chef/restaurant?

If you are submitting for yourself:

- What does it mean to you to be a member of the culinary industry?
- How in your work are you expressing or demonstrating equity, respect, community, and/or passion, and how are you creating a culture where all can thrive?
- What inspires you about food culture?
- Why do you do what you do?

More information is available on the entry form.

Categories

Excellence in food remains at the core of these awards; winning entries will also align with the Awards mission statement and the **values** of the James Beard Foundation. Candidates should also be making efforts to create a sustainable work culture, while contributing positively to their broader community.

Please note, only candidates who are active and whose business(es) are open will be considered.

Outstanding Restaurateur

A restaurateur who uses their establishment(s) as a vehicle for building community, demonstrates creativity in entrepreneurship, and integrity in restaurant operations.

- Eligible candidates must have been in the restaurant business for at least seven years, and they must not have won a James Beard Foundation chef award in the past three years.
- The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning restaurateur or restaurateurs, in the case of a pair or team of restaurateurs who are generally understood to be equal partners in the endeavor.

Outstanding Chef

A chef who sets high culinary standards and has served as a positive example for other food professionals.

- Eligible candidates must have been working as a chef for five or more consecutive years.
- The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning chef or chefs, in the case of a pair or team of chefs who are understood to be equal partners in the endeavor.

Outstanding Restaurant

A restaurant that demonstrates consistent excellence in food, atmosphere, hospitality, and operations.

- Eligible candidates must have been in business for five or more consecutive years, not including any time closed due to the pandemic.
- A certificate is given to the winning restaurant and the medallion and a certificate are given to the restaurant's principal owner, or general manager, or chef, at the discretion of the restaurant.

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Emerging Chef

A chef who displays exceptional talent, character, and leadership ability, and who is likely to make a significant impact in years to come.

- No age limit.
- The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning chef.

Best New Restaurant

A restaurant opened between October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, that already demonstrates excellence in cuisine, seems likely to make a significant impact in years to come, and demonstrates consistent excellence in food, atmosphere, hospitality, and operations.

- A certificate is given to the winning restaurant, and the medallion and a certificate are given to the restaurant's principal owner, or general manager, or chef(s), at the discretion of the restaurant.
- Please see time eligibility section (on page 2).

Outstanding Bakery

A baker of breads, pastries, or desserts that demonstrates consistent excellence in food, atmosphere, hospitality, and operations.

- Eligible candidates must consistently sell goods directly to the public, but do not need a brick-and-mortar presence. Eligible candidates must have been in business for the past three years.
- A certificate is given to the winning bakery or outlet, and the medallion and a certificate are given to the business' principal owner or general manager, or service director, at the discretion of the bakery.

Outstanding Pastry Chef or Baker

A pastry chef or baker who makes desserts, pastries, or breads. Candidate demonstrates exceptional skills and can be affiliated with any food business and does not need a brick-and-mortar presence.

- Eligible candidates must have been working as a pastry chef or chef who makes desserts or breads for the past five years.
- The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning chef or chefs, in the case of a pair or team of chefs who are generally understood to be equal partners in the endeavor.

Outstanding Hospitality

A restaurant, bar, or other food and drinking establishment that fosters a sense of hospitality among its customers and staff that serves as a beacon for the community and demonstrates consistent excellence in food, atmosphere, hospitality, and operations.

- Eligible candidates have been in operation for five or more years.
- A certificate is given to the winning establishment and the medallion, and a certificate are given to the restaurant’s principal owner, or general manager, or chef, at the discretion of the restaurant.

Outstanding Wine and Other Beverages Program

A restaurant that demonstrates exceptional care and skill in the pairing of wine and other beverages with food. This includes the selection, preparation, and serving of wine, cocktails, spirits, coffee, tea, beer, or any other beverage with outstanding hospitality and service that helps inform and enhance a customer’s appreciation of the beverage(s). Ethical sourcing will also be considered.

- The beverage program must be part of a restaurant that has been in operation for three or more consecutive years.
- A certificate is given to the winning restaurant, and the medallion and a certificate are given to the principal owner or beverage lead, at the discretion of the restaurant.

Outstanding Bar

A wine bar, beer bar, cocktail bar, coffee bar, or any other business whose primary offering is beverage and that demonstrates consistent excellence in curating a selection or in the preparation of drinks, along with outstanding atmosphere, hospitality, and operations.

- Business may be a stand-alone bar or within an establishment and may or may not serve food.
- Eligible candidates must have been in business for three or more consecutive years.
- A certificate is given to the winning bar, and the medallion and a certificate are given to the bar’s principal owner, program manager, lead barista, mixologist, or sommelier, at the discretion of the bar.

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Best New Bar

A wine bar, beer bar, cocktail bar, coffee bar, or any other business whose primary offering is beverage, opened between October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024, that already demonstrates excellence in beverages, seems likely to make a significant impact in years to come, and demonstrates consistent excellence in the preparation of drinks, sourcing, service, hospitality, atmosphere, and operations.

- Business may be a stand-alone bar or within an establishment and may or may not serve food.
- Please see time eligibility section (on page 3).
- A certificate is given to the winning bar and the medallion and a certificate are given to the bar's principal owner, program manager, lead barista, mixologist, or sommelier, at the discretion of the bar.

Outstanding Professional in Beverage Service

A service professional who curates and serves wine, beer, or other offerings such as sake, low- and non-alcoholic beverages in a restaurant or bar setting; or winery, distillery or brewery that also serves food. Candidate has set high standards; demonstrates creativity and consistency in excellence, innovation, hospitality; is making efforts to create a sustainable work culture; and has served as an exceptional example or mentor for other beverage professionals.

- Eligible candidates must have been in the industry for at least seven years.
- Eligible candidates may include beverage directors, sommeliers, and cicerones, etc.
- The medallion and a certificate are given to the beverage service professional.

Outstanding Professional in Cocktail Service

A service professional who creates and serves cocktails or other offerings such as low- and non-alcoholic beverages. Candidate has set high standards; demonstrates creativity and consistency in excellence, innovation, hospitality; is making efforts to create a sustainable work culture; and has served as an exceptional example or mentor for other beverage professionals.

- Eligible candidates must have been in the industry for at least seven years.
- Eligible candidates may include bartenders, cocktail professionals, or owners, who are creative leads and/or are active in the crafting of their offerings
- The medallion and a certificate are given to the cocktail service professional.

Award Categories Based on Regions

- California
- Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH)
- Mid-Atlantic (DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA, VA)
- Midwest (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD, WI)
- Mountain (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)
- New York State
- Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)
- Northwest & Pacific (AK, HI, OR, WA)
- Southeast (GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, WV)
- South (AL, AR, FL, LA, MS, PR)
- Southwest (AZ, NM, NV, OK)
- Texas

The definition of the regions may be modified from time to time as appropriate by the subcommittee, with the prior approval of the Awards Committee and the James Beard Foundation.

Best Chefs (by region)

Chefs who set high standards in their culinary skills and leadership abilities and who are making efforts to help create a sustainable work culture in their respective regions.

- A candidate may be from any kind of dining establishment but must have been working as a chef in the region for at least three years.
- The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning chef or, in the case of a pair or team of chefs who are generally understood to be equal partners in the endeavor, chefs.

America's Classics

A locally and independently owned restaurant with timeless appeal, beloved in its region for food that reflects the character and cultural traditions of its community.

- The establishment must have been in existence for at least 10 years. Chosen by the committee.