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Pennsylvania Conference for Women, Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association Announce \$175,000 Initiative to Support Women-Owned Restaurants

Philadelphia celebrity chef Barbie Marshall has joined the [Pennsylvania Conference for Women](#) and the [Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association](#) to announce a new \$175,000 initiative to award grants to women-owned restaurants across Pennsylvania – in an effort to assist women in an industry that has been devastated by COVID-19.

The program will provide \$2,500 grants to more than 70 women-owned restaurants across Pennsylvania, which will be selected via an application process through the Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association. Restaurants can apply [here](#). Grant recipients are scheduled to be announced in October.

“I’m honored to be a part of this initiative, which will help so many of our homegrown women-owned restaurants,” said Marshall, a private chef and restaurant consultant who appeared on two seasons of the popular television show Hell’s Kitchen. “Restaurants are the heart of our communities, where people can go for comfort and nourishment, and they have been devastated by the pandemic.”

The non-partisan, nonprofit Pennsylvania Conference for Women is committed to promoting gender equality and to amplifying the influence of women in the workplace.

This year women are shouldering a disproportionate burden due to the impact of Covid-19. The pandemic has resulted in mass layoffs in many industries that employ women, such as hospitality and retail, has increased caregiving responsibilities, and has had a devastating impact on small businesses.

“For 17 years, the Pennsylvania Conference for Women has received a warm and enthusiastic welcome in our state,” said Pennsylvania Conference for Women Board President Leslie Stiles. “Through this initiative, we are seeking to give back and to help women restaurant owners weather the fiscal upheaval that COVID-19 is causing. It truly is an example of women helping women during these difficult times.”

Pennsylvania restaurants have been forced to lay off more than 330,000 employees due to the pandemic, with current staffing levels at only 63 percent of pre-pandemic numbers.

“For more than six months, restaurants have been forced to close or to operate at a deeply decreased capacity,” said John Longstreet, PRLA president & CEO. “Restaurants truly are suffering, and this grant will make a measurable impact for women restaurant owners across Pennsylvania.”

Thousands are expected to join the virtual Pennsylvania Conference for Women this year, which will feature speakers including Academy Award-winning actor, producer, and activist Viola Davis and education advocate and author Tara Westover. The interactive Conference also will give attendees opportunities to engage with speakers and each other, support women-owned businesses and women in business through a virtual exhibit hall and participate in a career pavilion and job fair.

The Pennsylvania Conference for Women, which last year attracted more than 12,000 people, is part of the [nation's largest network of women's conferences](#), with events in California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Texas, as well as year-round programming.

Tickets are available at <https://www.paconferenceforwomen.org>. To apply for media credentials to cover the 2020 Pennsylvania Conference for Women, please complete [this form](#).

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