

SOUTHERN SMOKE FOUNDATION



2020 Year-End Report

When Covid-19 became an undeniable threat to public health in March, restaurants across the country shut down, forcing millions of cooks, dishwashers, servers, hosts, managers, bartenders and more into sudden unemployment.

Donations large and small from individuals, other organizations, corporations, and local and national businesses to our Emergency Relief Fund allowed Southern Smoke to help literally thousands of Americans in crisis.

Southern Smoke is overwhelmed with gratitude to the generosity of so many as we could absolutely not have helped the bulk of grantees without a multitude of fundraising efforts and generosity. We are also infinitely thankful that so many have already and continue to trust us with these dollars and with faith that we are wise stewards of these dollars.

To the right are some of our significant efforts and partnerships in the last year.

- Distributed more than **\$4.3 MILLION** to 2,300 people in the food and beverage industry nationwide since the beginning of COVID-19 through the end of December.
- Created a partnership with Mental Health American of Greater Houston and the University of Houston Psychology Department to provide *free mental healthcare to any food and beverage worker in the state of Texas and their children*. The program has been so successful that it's currently on a wait. We're exploring additional partnerships in Texas and in other states to hopefully, one day, provide this service nationwide.
- Launched a **\$4 MILLION** *Emergency Relief Fund for Chicago* restaurant, bar and coffee shop workers.
- Created a partnership with the Restaurant Workers Community Foundation to become their largest beneficiary of funds—a total of **\$3,050,000**.
- Created a partnership with the *Emeril Lagasse Foundation* to distribute **\$175,000** in emergency relief to restaurant workers in the Gulf states.
- Southern Smoke was the recipient of David Chang's historic **\$1 MILLION** win on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*—the first charity in the show's history to win the entire prize.
- *Hired more than 40 furloughed food and beverage industry employees* to work as case workers and application screeners.
- Developed a partnership with the 1K Project. The Southern Smoke case workers recommend previous grant recipients who are still in need to the 1K Project team to potentially receive an additional \$1K per month for three months, thanks to generous individual donors.
- Received and processed 31,499 applications. Of those, 2,780 met the funding requirements and were submitted to the awards committee for a vote. 2,169 were funded.

Testimonials

What follows is a comprehensive overview of who has been helped in the last year of this pandemic. But first, we will let these awardee testimonials speak for themselves, showing the very real impact this organization has had for real people because of the financial support of so many.

“Words can’t express how much of a blessing Southern Smoke is to our community. I have worked at the same restaurant for 9 years, and in only one day, everything changed so quickly. At first, employees were told that we’d only be open for to-go orders and deliveries for the next two weeks. Within a few days, it turned into employees being laid off indefinitely and not knowing where to go from there. I applied to Southern Smoke, and I never in a million years thought this would actually happen to me. They accepted my grant! Not only is this helping me out financially with my bills, but it has relieved so much stress for me. Southern Smoke is truly a godsend. I honestly can’t express how grateful I am. It’s amazing how the community has come together and how industry workers are just like one big family. Southern Smoke has given me, and many others, hope. I’m so appreciative of foundations like them. Don’t give up guys! We will make it through this.”

“The grant I received from Southern Smoke was a beacon of hope. I was so scared, I was on the internet day and night, researching whatever I could find about grants and loans. Southern Smoke was the very first one who emailed me and said “We will help you.” It stopped my breath for a minute, I had to read it over and over again. I used the money to pay the mortgage payment on my building loan.”

“Amazing foundation. Super effective and fast to help me and my family in hard times of Covid, when we all were let go from a job at a restaurant that I worked for 7 years. Forever in my heart Veronica Luna and Chris Shepherd, and all hard-working people in Southern Smoke. My help news arrived on Easter evening, that foundation people were working hard even on a holiday. You are the best and you are so loved and appreciated.”

“I was just awarded an amazing grant from Southern Smoke which is literally saving me. I ugly cried for 2 days. It’s not easy to ask for help, and I struggle to even accept help most times. Chris and his staff are truly heroes. I am overwhelmed with gratitude and so very thankful for what he is doing. His team has been amazing.”

“You have no idea how ELATED I am to receive this news!! I really appreciate you and all of your partners and the donors of Southern Smoke, and a special shoutout to Alison for working with me on my case and being super patient while I gathered all of the necessary information. If there is anything I can do to pay it forward to your organization now or in the future, please let me know. I am currently looking around at my apartment, and my 4-year-old son, and feel a sense of relief. We are going to be OKAY. And I hope the same for the future of myself and my fellow service industry workers.”

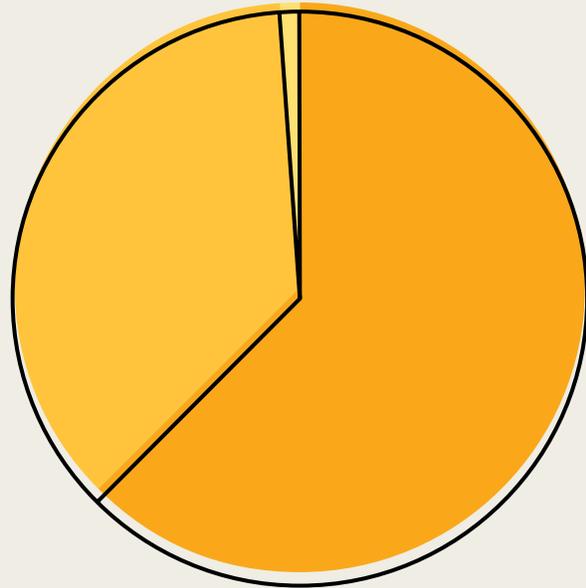
“I just received a mail notifying me about the grant. This is incredibly helpful. You are an angel. I want to send you a virtual hug and thank you and the whole team for the incredible job you are doing. God bless you!!”

GENDER

Women Account for a Majority of Recipients

Four times as many women as men dropped out of the labor force during the pandemic, a trend that continues. Southern Smoke has awarded a significantly higher percentage of grants to women versus men, a majority of whom are also single mothers with no child support. A lack of childcare is a driving force for women dropping out of the labor market.

- Men
- Women
- No Answer

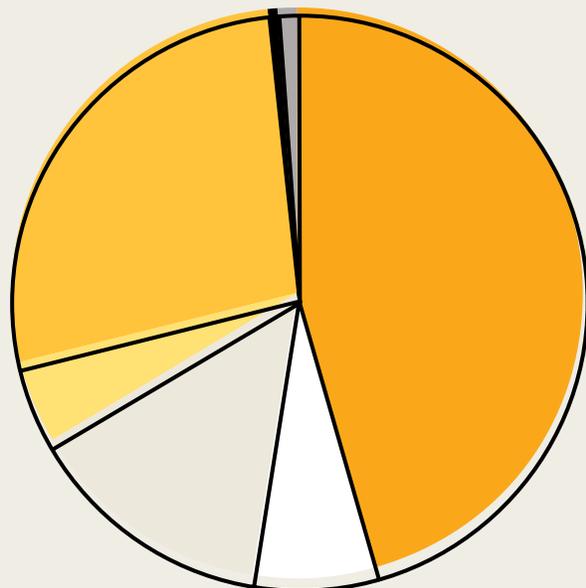


RACE

People of Color Have Been Disproportionately Affected by the Virus

People of color have been greatly affected by Covid-19 in general, and in the food and beverage industry, specifically. Southern Smoke has granted money to people on the basis of immediate need without giving special preference to one group over another. However, these race statistics reflect the disproportionate effect of the virus throughout the United States.

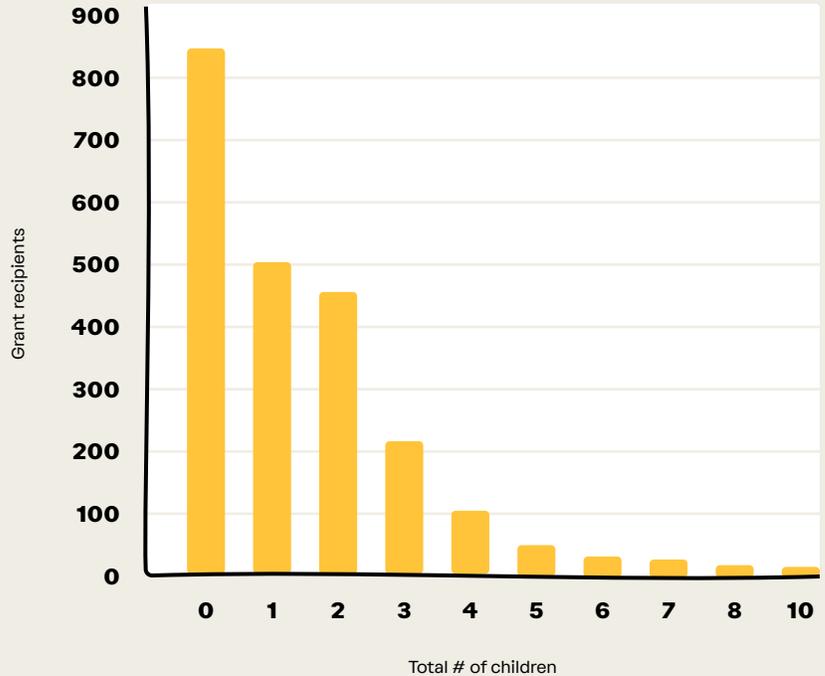
- White
- Other
- Black
- Asian
- Latino
- Native American
- Pacific



CHILDREN

Households with Children Comprise the Majority of Grant Awardees.

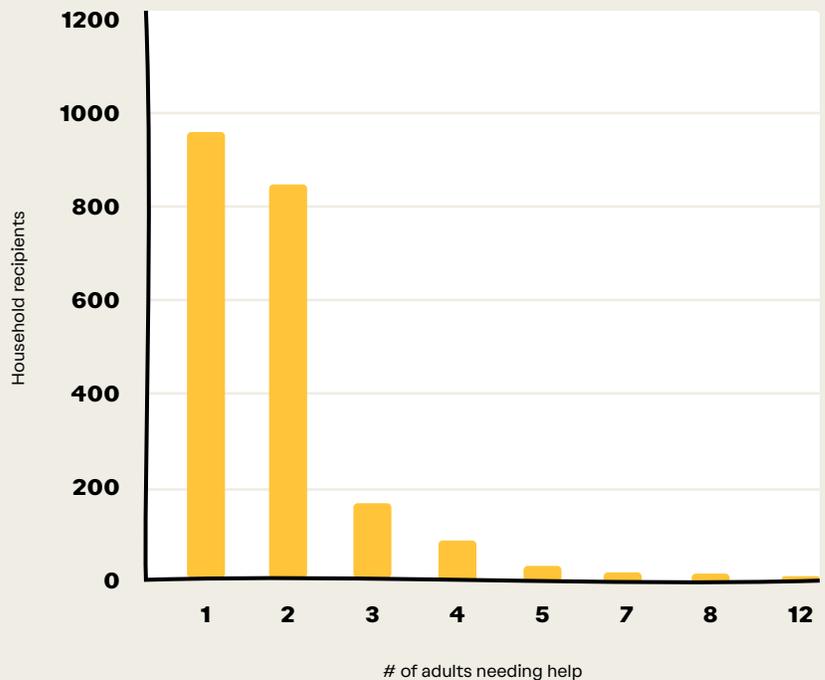
Nearly 70% of Southern Smoke grant recipients had at least one minor child at home. 60% have at least two. The majority of these recipients are single parents (mostly mothers) who receive zero child or marital support.



ADULTS

More than half of household recipients have more than one adult needing help.

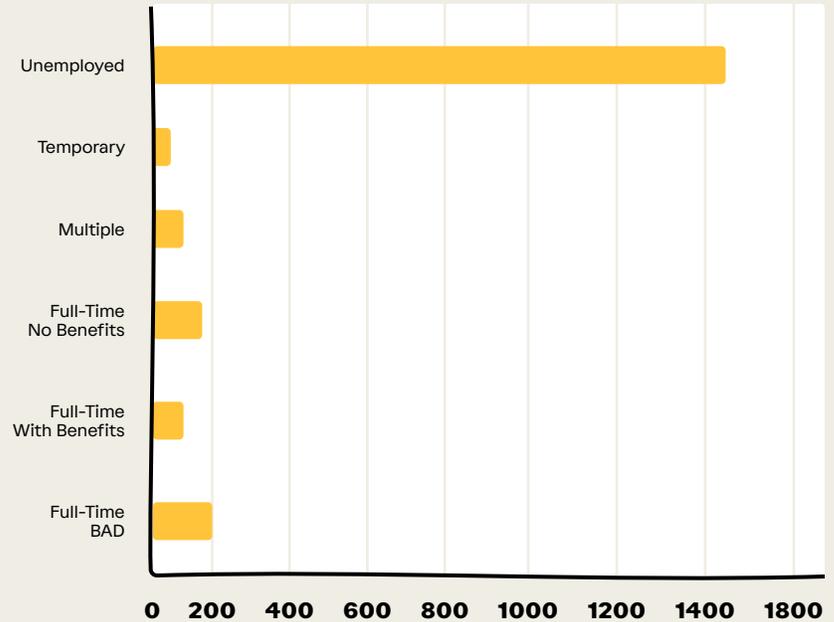
Southern Smoke is proud the organization has been able to keep countless recipients from immediate or near-future homelessness. As the pandemic drags on, more people are facing the end of rent deferment or mortgage forbearance, increasing need as months pass.



EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The vast majority of those receiving help are currently unemployed due to Covid.

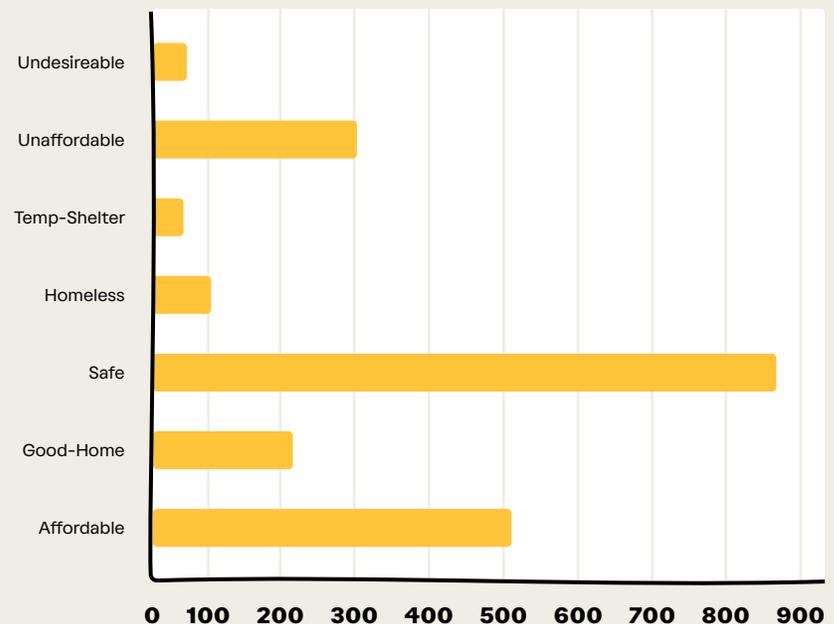
It comes as no surprise that a large majority of grant recipients are currently unemployed. Southern Smoke requires that applicants were employed prior to facing their crisis situation for at least 30 hours per week in the food and beverage industry, for at least 6 months. Most recipients are now unemployed due to the pandemic.



LIVING

One fourth of awardees are living in a precarious situation.

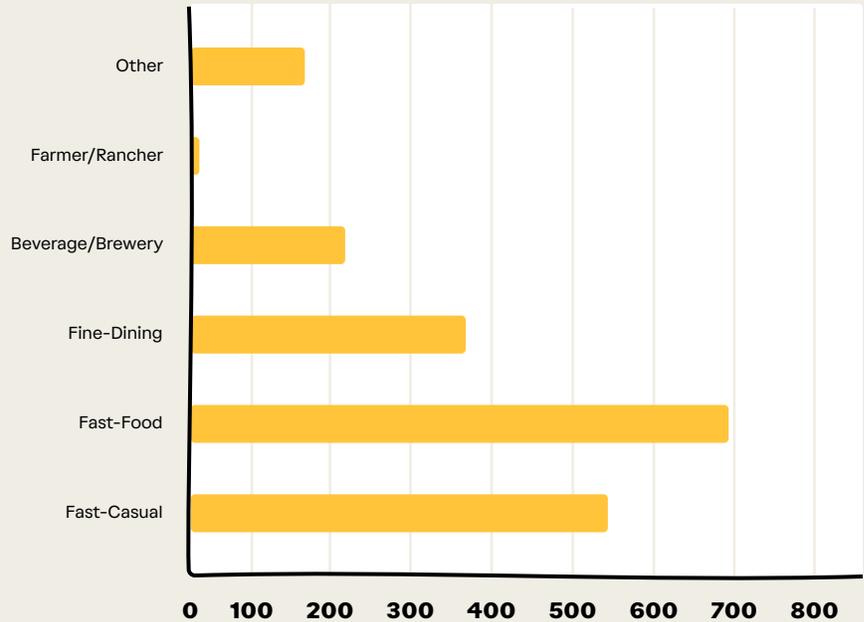
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TYPE OF RESTAURANT

A majority of awardees worked for fast food or fast casual establishments.

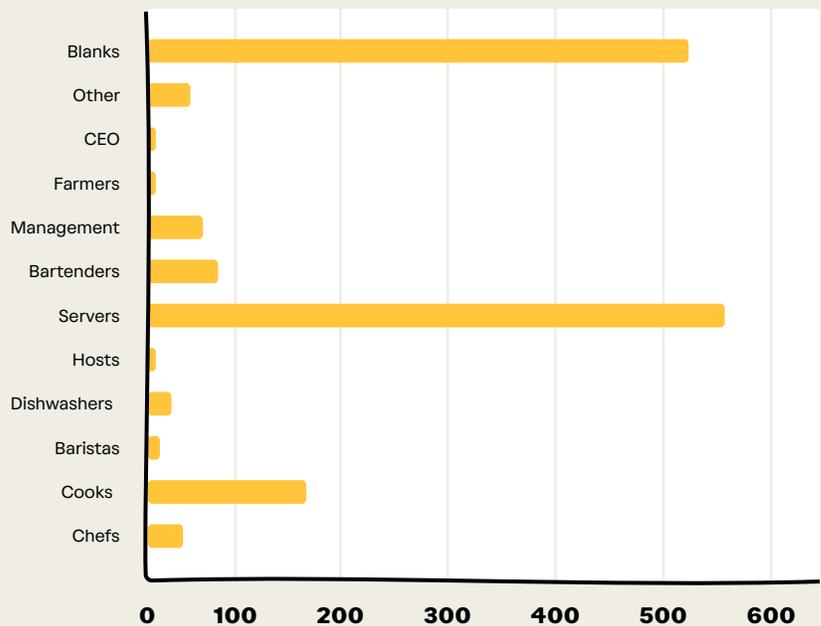
Well over half of Southern Smoke recipients were already in economically-insecure situations, having worked in fast food or fast-casual establishments for low wages prior to the pandemic.



POSITION

Southern Smoke supports workers throughout the supply chain.

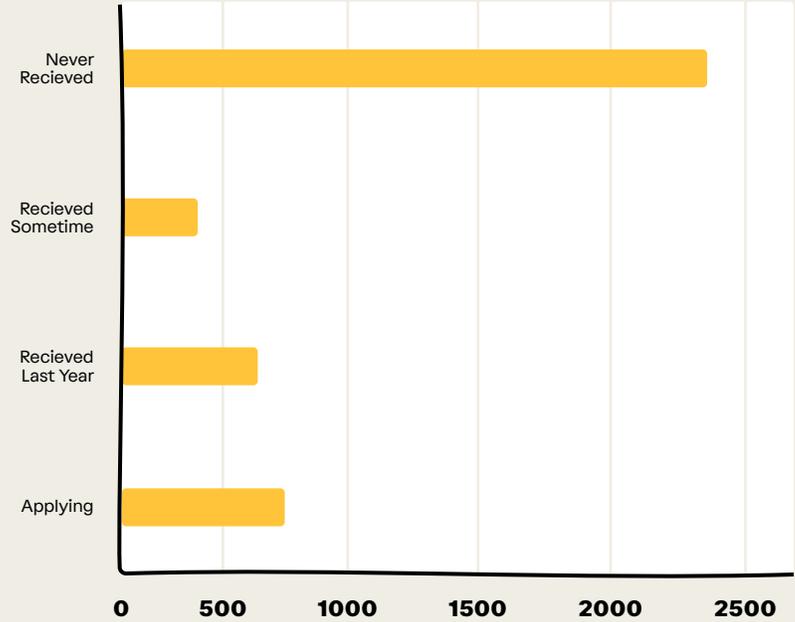
Although servers make up the bulk of Southern Smoke's grant recipients, many cooks, bartenders, managers, baristas, dishwashers, hosts, and even farmers have received support. As long as a person in crisis has been employed in the food and/or beverage industry within the last six months, he or she is eligible to apply for support.



FOOD ASSISTANCE/FOOD INSECURITY

Many Southern Smoke grant recipients face food Insecurity like never before.

The clear majority of Southern Smoke grantees never faced food insecurity like they are today. Most had never had to seek food benefits from food stamps/ SNAP/WIC/local food pantries until now. Southern Smoke is thankful to be able to help support feeding individuals and families but it is clear there is a dearth in available support in our society.



REGIONAL STATS

States where highest amounts in grants were distributed.

Southern Smoke has helped food and beverage industry workers throughout the United States with larger, more populous states expectedly needing the most help.

