

# SOUTHERN SMOKE FOUNDATION



## 2022 Year-End Report



**SOUTHERN  
SMOKE  
FOUNDATION**

**\$10,353,817**  
**FUNDS DISTRIBUTED SINCE 2015**

## **WHO WE ARE**

### **OUR MISSION**

Southern Smoke Foundation supports members of the food and beverage industry in crisis nationwide through emergency relief funding and access to mental health care.

### **OUR VALUES**

#### **Respect**

We embrace inclusivity and diversity operationally and in stewardship. We treat all people with dignity and offer assistance without judgment. We conduct our business professionally and transparently.

#### **Passion**

We are driven daily to help food and beverage workers in crisis nationwide. We love the food and beverage industry and believe its ultimate success is in the health and happiness of its workers. We think critically about the mental health of individuals, hoping to create a new standard for free care.

#### **Collaboration**

We celebrate partners who cherish high-level work for the most good. We foster a culture of teamwork where everyone has an equal voice. We encourage new ideas from both within and outside our organization.

#### **Impact**

We seek to help with conviction and boldness. We believe in the importance of a safety net that stretches across the country. We operate with a minimal overhead to maximize the amount of aid that we can provide.



**A YEAR FOR  
HOPE**



# “What do you wish for?”

Each day we hear troubling stories. Hard-working people whose homes were destroyed by tornadoes, fathers sleeping in cars worried that their children wouldn't have a bed that evening, and mothers plagued by fear in darkened apartments, days from eviction. Entire communities wrecked by hurricanes. Entire cities crippled by faulty infrastructure.

It gets tough. Our incredible case managers are the first ones to hear these heart-wrenching stories. We are astounded by their daily strength and compassion, and we make sure they have the support they need when the weight of those stories bears down.

Food and beverage workers are experiencing tough times. Costs are soaring and wages aren't. Medical emergencies are piling up. Accidents will always happen. Natural disasters seemingly strike harder and more frequently than ever. And the everyday stress and anxiety that comes with trying to make ends meet, working long hours is adding up. For all of the workers who fall behind because of these crises, who have nowhere else to turn, who lack that safety net, who feel lonely and lost, we are here, and we will continue to be here. We will hear those hard stories, and we will work hard to help them.

We do this because it's what we know to do. Plus, once in a while, we receive the best gift of all: Proof that all of the work that we do results in real, positive change for a food and beverage industry worker.

As we will tell you in this report, our major fundraiser, Southern Smoke Festival, returned this year in the best possible way. For three days we welcomed more than 70 chefs, some of the coolest artists in music, and thousands of hungry and happy people to our three events in Houston. Truly, it was a blast. Our partners, our friends, our volunteers, our supporters: They all had a huge hand in making it possible.

That weekend, we also welcomed one of our grant recipients, Danny Caplinger, and his mother Laura. In 2018, Danny was struck by a van while riding his motorcycle. The accident caused a traumatic brain injury with multiple surgeries and rehabilitation needed. When Laura couldn't afford the intensive inpatient rehab, which would give him the best chance to live a more independent life, she found us through a hospital volunteer. But the same day Laura told us Danny's story, we committed to awarding her \$100,000. Danny went to rehab, began to recover, and here he was at our festival four years later.

Danny stood from his wheelchair and cooked a pizza with our friend Chris Bianco. As Danny's pie emerged from the oven, Chris told him it was like his very own birthday cake. So someone asked Danny:

“What do you wish for?”

**“Good health!”**



**Kathryn Lott**  
Executive Director



**Chris Shepherd**  
Founding Director & Honorary Chairman

# 2022 IN REVIEW

## TOTAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTED

**\$897,497**

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## DISASTER RESPONSE

### NATURAL DISASTERS

\$191,720 Distributed  
128 Cases awarded

### HURRICANE IAN

\$31,510 Distributed  
12 Cases awarded

### HURRICANE FIONA

\$48,085 Distributed  
64 Cases awarded

### KENTUCKY TORNADO

\$31,410 Distributed  
17 Cases awarded

### MISSISSIPPI WATER CRISIS

\$64,900 Distributed  
24 Cases awarded

### NEW YORK & TEXAS RESTAURANT FIRES

\$15,065 Distributed  
10 Cases awarded

# EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND IMPACT

Southern Smoke Foundation's Emergency Relief Fund was established to be the safety net for food and beverage workers nationwide.

When restaurant, bar and cafe workers, farmers and ranchers, winemakers, distillers and brewers, and all members of the American food chain experience personal crises, they can turn to us to help lift them out from their financial plight.

In 2022, we were there for people during and after natural disasters like hurricanes Fiona and Ian and the tornadoes that ripped through Kentucky in January. We funded families impacted by the Jackson, Mississippi, water crisis. We sent individuals money within days to ensure they wouldn't be evicted from their homes because they had to pay for medical treatment. We helped workers across America emerge from darkness.

**\$7,823** A St. Cloud, Florida, server and husband with three young children received funding to pay for thousands of dollars in medical bills and mortgage payments after receiving an unexpected diagnosis requiring him to undergo a heart transplant. He had previously sold his car just to pay for whatever bills he could.

**\$13,750** A Jackson, Mississippi cook received funding for a year of housing. After a fire destroyed their previous home, he had done everything to keep his seven young children, including infant twins, sheltered in hotels and a small family apartment, but the Jackson water crisis completely threatened their safety.

## TOP STATES + TERRITORIES FUNDED

Illinois: \$237,010  
Florida: \$98,805  
Texas: \$72,242  
Mississippi: \$66,560  
Puerto Rico: \$44,105

## TOP THREE FUNDED ITEMS:

1. Rent/Housing
2. Medical Bills
3. Disaster Relief

# MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

It is hard work. Long hours in intense conditions. Powerful stressors. A career in the food and beverage industry is rewarding but taxing, and those who carry a passion for serving others can often feel alone and uncertain about the future.

With the need for affordable and accessible mental health care growing and little aid available to F+B workers nationwide, we are dedicated to providing as much assistance as necessary to the people we serve. Our mental health care program continues to grow, and through our university affiliate program, no-cost mental health counseling is available to food and beverage workers and their children in five states.

As our programs in California, Illinois, Louisiana, Texas, and a pilot program in Pennsylvania grow, we are working to continue expansion, with partnership commitments in place in Connecticut and New York for 2023. We are looking to secure extensions of the program in seven new states total in 2023, and by 2028, we pledge to have programs providing free mental health care for food and beverage workers and their children in all 50 states.

*As more food and beverage workers access and receive care through our program, we are learning in real time how the work may progress and develop.*

For example, a California client required more intensive services associated with substance use than our program could initially provide, so our partner Cal Lutheran worked intimately with the client to ensure they were referred to a vetted sliding-scale clinic that could arrange the care he needed most.

In another example, a Louisiana-based client relocating to California was able to transfer within our university partner program into their new state's program. We see that our network can and will grow with every partnership we build.

**1,161** Food and beverage workers offered access to free mental health care

**1,875** Free mental health counseling sessions provided to food and beverage workers across four states

Most commonly reported mental health related challenges:

- Lack of health insurance, ability to pay for therapy
- High expectations and pressure within the food and beverage industry
- Trauma related to immigration status and daily life
- Increased anxiety during holidays, flu season
- PTSD



# \$1,620,000

RAISED TO SUPPORT FOOD AND BEVERAGE WORKERS NATIONWIDE

**SOUTHERN  
SMOKE  
FESTIVAL**

## **SOUTHERN SMOKE FESTIVAL**

It all started with the first Southern Smoke Festival seven years ago, and in 2022 after a two-year absence, our largest fundraising effort of the year returned.

It was bigger and more impactful than ever, raising \$1.62 million for food and beverage workers in need nationwide.

Over three events spanning three days in October 2022, more than 70 of the best chefs in America wowed us with amazing food, while artists like Shakey Graves, Robert Ellis and more entertained us on stage. Thank you to our Board of Directors for supporting us with sponsorships, ticket sales, and by hosting kickoff events. Your work went a long way to ensuring our most successful event yet!

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**5,258** SSF22 attendees

**70** Chefs

**21** Cities represented by our SSF22 chefs

**14** States represented by our SSF22 chefs

**15** James Beard award winners among featured chefs

**14.5+ M** Combined IG followers among featured chefs





FEATURED CHEFS

**GAIL SIMMONS**  
**CHRIS BIANCO • AARON FRANKLIN**  
**TOM COLICCHIO**  
**DAWN BURRELL • STEPHANIE IZARD**  
**BROOKE WILLIAMSON**

# THANK YOU

TO ALL OF OUR SSF22 SPONSORS

ALASKA SEAFOOD • YETI • LEXUS • C. BALDWIN • FOOD & WINE  
CROWN ROYAL • 8TH WONDER BREWERY & DISTILLERY  
HORNITOS & TRES GENERATIONS • TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA  
DESIGN BY PRINCIPLE • SYSCO • SEFF FAMILY & AMES FAMILY  
GEE EYE CARE • HAXEL LANDSCAPING • ATHLETIC BREWERY  
AMERICAN EXPRESS & RESY • AGRICOLE HOSPITALITY  
INDIANOLA • TABASCO • CAYSON • HEB • SENTINEL ONE • RAMBLER  
CITY OF HOUSTON • HIRSCH VINEYARDS • MINER FAMILY WINERY  
ROBERT SINSKEY VINEYARDS • ALTA MARFA • C.L. BUTAUD  
DUCHMAN FAMILY WINERY • SOUTHOLD FARM + CELLAR  
JUNE'S ROSÉ • WILLIAM CHRIS VINEYARDS • NOBLE VINES  
QUINTA DO CRASTO • SUSANA BALBO WINES • PIPER SONOMA  
MASI • HOPE FAMILY WINES • ELOUAN • ECHO BAY • DIORA WINES  
FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA WINERY • ARGYLE WINERY  
BECKER VINEYARDS • APEROL • LIQUID ALCHEMIST • JON HART  
FOGO CHARCOAL • INDIAN HEAD FIREWOOD  
ETCHMAN • COPYDOTCOM







## Programs & Initiatives

### **CHEF AMBASSADORS**

Thank you to the chefs and industry professionals who stand by us, helping to share our mission and spread awareness with their communities in times of need. In 2022, we launched a program to bring more of them to our table. The Chef Ambassadors program currently consists of 33 acclaimed chefs representing 10 states and six regions across the country, and it's growing.

### **GIVING TUESDAY**

We were thrilled to receive a \$25,000 donation for Giving Tuesday. With great thanks to Erick and Mara Calderon, of Art Blocks, we were able to kick off a matching gift campaign. We are happy to report that our donors showed up to hit the matching goal, doubling the full donation to \$50,000. Thank you to our Board of Directors for their help in ensuring we hit the mark!

“The mental health crisis in this industry we all hold so dear has been smoldering under the surface for decades. No single person or organization is going to solve it, but with each person who feels empowered to speak up and seek help, hope, and community a change is sparked. Southern Smoke will be there to light the way forward.”

**Kat Kinsman**

Senior Editor, Food & Wine

## Major Media Spotlights

### **GMA3: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Southern Smoke  
Foundation raises  
money for food and  
beverage industry

### **CULTUREMAP**

Chris Shepherd's Star-  
studded Southern  
Smoke Festival Scorches  
with Record \$1.6M  
Raised in Big Return

### **BACK OF HOUSE**

This Organization Sends  
Financial Support Directly  
to Restaurant Industry  
Workers' Pockets

### **FOOD & WINE**

How to Get Free  
Mental Health Care If  
You Work in the  
Hospitality Industry

[Click here to read more](#)



# 2022 PARTNERS

Your generosity directly impacts our industry, oftentimes by allowing your neighbors to keep the lights on, afford life-saving medications, or simply buy basic necessities like clothing. Without you, none of this would be possible.  
We're so happy to have you with us.

**8TH WONDER BREWERY AND DISTILLERY • AIG • AMEX/RESY  
ALASKA SEAFOOD • ATHLETIC BREWING • BEAM SUNTORY  
BENTO BOX • CAL LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY • CROWN ROYAL  
ELIJAH CRAIG • ERICK AND MARA CALDERON  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY'S COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
FOOD & WINE • FRANKIE LEMMON SCHOOL & FOUNDATION  
HEAVEN HILL FAMILY DISTILLERY • HOT LUCK LIVE FOOD & MUSIC  
LEXUS • LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY • MADEIN  
MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF GREATER HOUSTON  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY • RAMBLER  
RESTAURANT WORKERS' COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
ROBERT M. SINSKEY FOUNDATION • SYSCO  
TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA / LOVE, TITO'S  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON • WHITE OAK MUSIC HALL • YETI**

**SOUTHERN  
SMOKE  
FOUNDATION**

# Thank you

It takes a village to make our fierce and nimble nonprofit run as strong as it does. We thank you for believing in us, supporting us, and promoting our mission of helping those who need it most. It has been a successful year, and you certainly share in the celebration.

We can't wait to see what 2023 has in store, including new programs, expanded initiatives, and more hope for food and beverage workers nationwide challenged with crises. Know that every step of the way, your support will be important to our growth.

