

**SOUTHERN
SMOKE
FOUNDATION**



A Year in Service

2023 YEAR-END REPORT

January 2024

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Thank You

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“I knew that from the moment I started serving as executive director of Southern Smoke Foundation, I would bear witness to the everyday magic made by our passionate team...

So, there I was in August watching our staff tackle one of its greatest challenges yet: finding every option possible to help food and beverage workers on the Hawaiian island of Maui. These workers lost their homes, and in some cases lost family members and friends, to devastating wildfires.

Our case management team fielded hundreds of applications for emergency relief funding. We kept close contact with partners who could assist us. We passed special funding guidelines for these wildfire victims to ensure we could help everyone in the queue. In all, we funded more than \$280,000 to individuals living and working in Maui.

That was my first month on the job.

In my second month, we co-hosted an industry roundtable in New York, focused on improving mental health outcomes for workers nationwide. Joined by our incredible partners, the roundtable represented a milestone in our journey to provide access to mental health services to all F+B workers.

I am amazed at the dedication our team has shown in growing *Behind You*, our mental health initiative aimed at providing these essential services to workers at no cost. We are fully operational in California, Illinois, Louisiana, New York and Texas, providing more than 1,800 no-cost counseling sessions in 2023, and thanks to Love, Tito's and Restaurant Giving Circle, we are adding five states in 2024. Through our six university partners, we are not only talking about the mental health of F+B workers, but we are also taking action that can lead to brighter futures.

On the heels of our New York roundtable came Southern Smoke Festival 2023, a weekend of boundless joy. Over two days and multiple events, we shed tears, raised our voices, shared great bites and drinks and made lifelong memories. And we raised \$1.8 million for members of the food and beverage industry nationwide.



In 2023 we granted more than \$1 million to F+B workers nationwide, seeing an increase in Emergency Relief Fund applications. We expanded our no-cost mental health program *Behind You* by 40 percent. Yes, our team makes magic, and I am so thankful I get to work with them.

Now, it is onto 2024, and Southern Smoke Foundation is needed more than ever. We plan to answer the call of food and beverage workers nationwide by working tirelessly to provide more support through Emergency Relief Funding and access to mental health services. We are investing in technology to make case management more efficient, thoughtfully expanding our capabilities through smart partnerships and growth strategies, and engaging further with our chef and beverage community to increase awareness of our efforts.

To our supporters: Thank you for believing in us. To our future friends and partners: We hope you will join us, because if our team and the success they have achieved are any indication, you'll want to be part of this."



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L.B.".

LINDSEY BROWN
Executive Director



OUR MISSION

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



Emergency Relief Fund: Helping workers in crisis

The Emergency Relief Fund distributes money to F+B workers in crisis nationwide during and after natural disasters, accidents, medical emergencies, loss of wages, mental health crises, and other unforeseen events.

\$11.2 MILLION +

FUNDS DISTRIBUTED SINCE 2015

Behind You: A no-cost mental health initiative for F+B workers



Through our university affiliate program, we grant our partner universities funds that allow for supervised graduate-level clinicians to offer no-cost counseling services to members of our industry in five states—Texas, Louisiana, Illinois, California, and New York. Those who live outside of service states are encouraged to apply for financial assistance for mental health services through the Emergency Relief Fund.

4,200+

SESSIONS PROVIDED SINCE 2020

300+

F+B WORKERS RECEIVED SERVICES SINCE 2020

EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND



2023 OVERVIEW

\$1M +

Granted to F+B workers in crisis in 2023

\$2,924

Average Grant Amount

363

Individuals granted

33%

Increase in applications from 2022 to 2023

MOST COMMON NEEDS

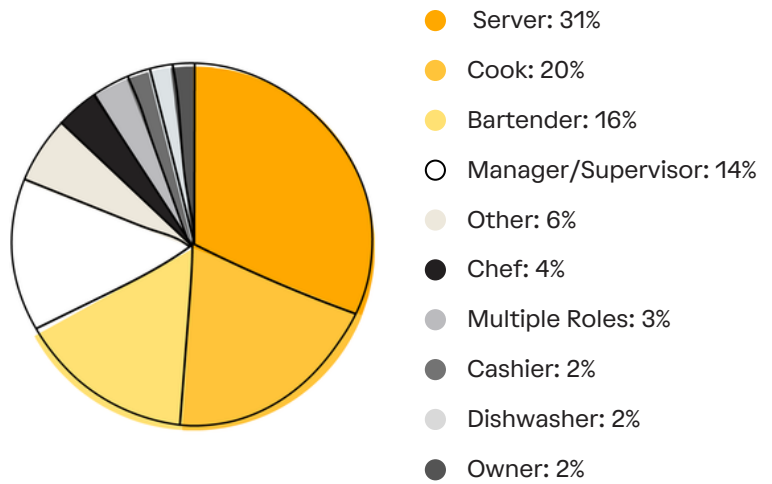
Rent/Mortgage | Utility Bills | Medical Expenses
Disaster Relief/Displacement

TOP REPORTED CRISES

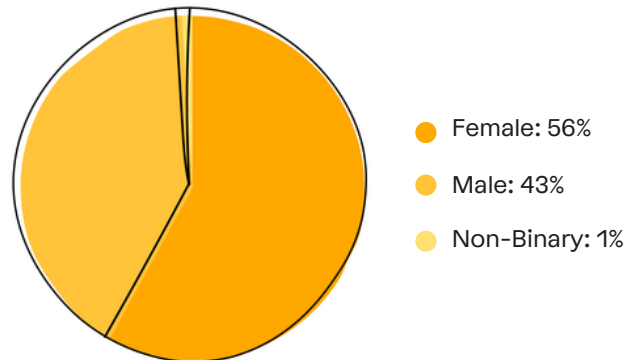
Maui Fires | Medical Diagnosis
Change of Circumstance | Accident



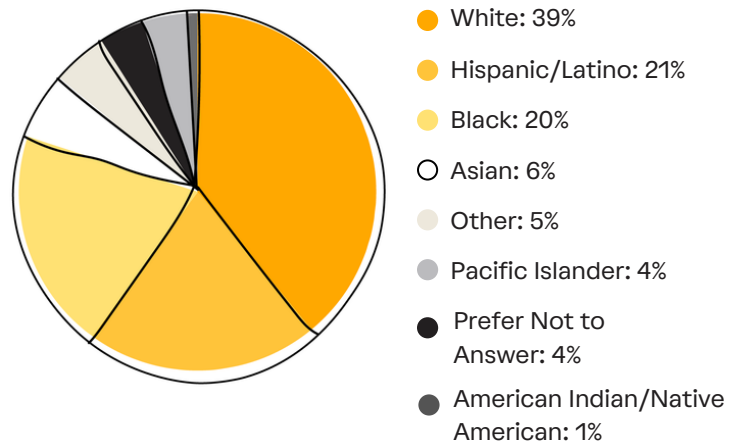
TOP FUNDED POSITIONS



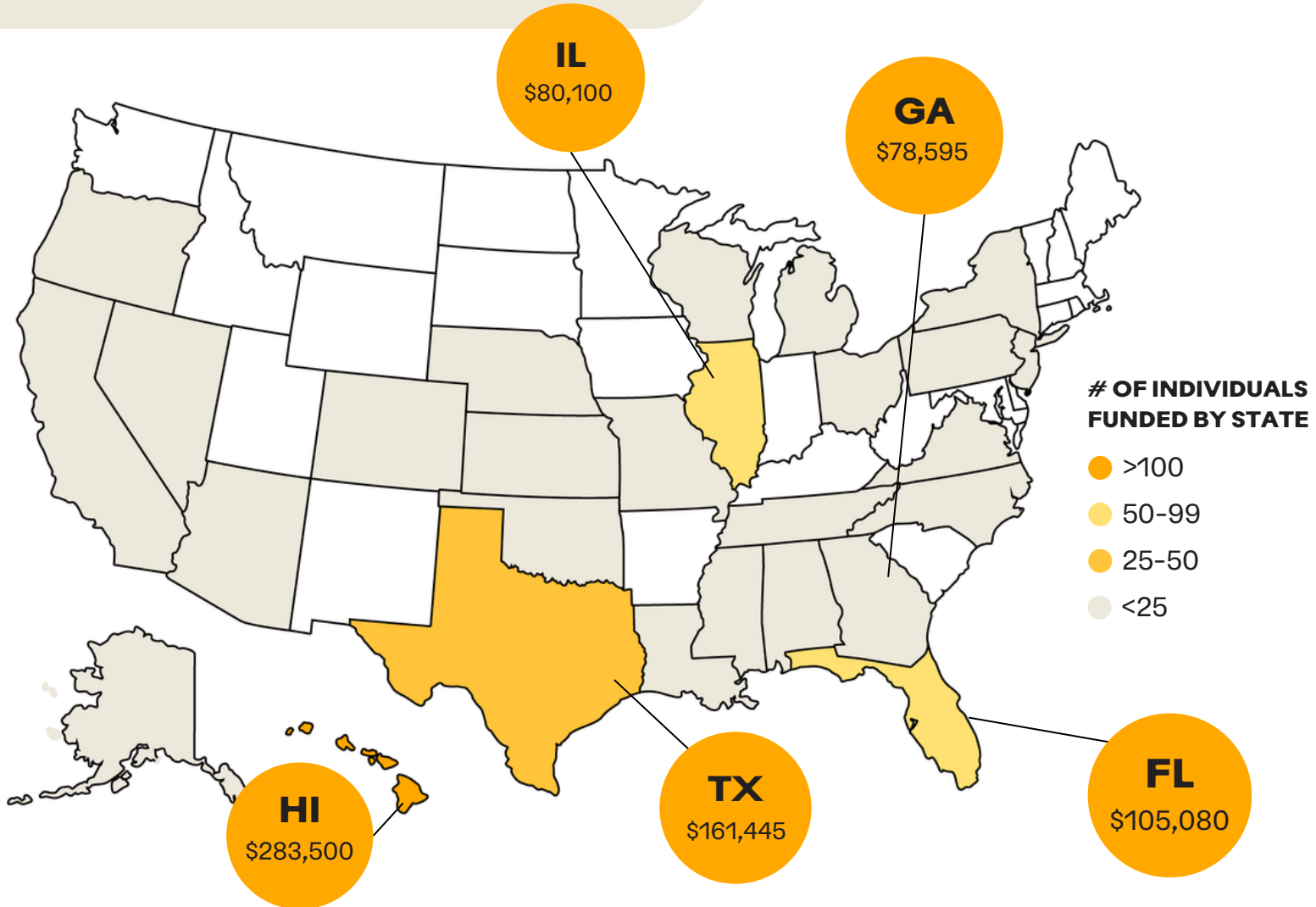
GENDER BREAKDOWN



RACE BREAKDOWN



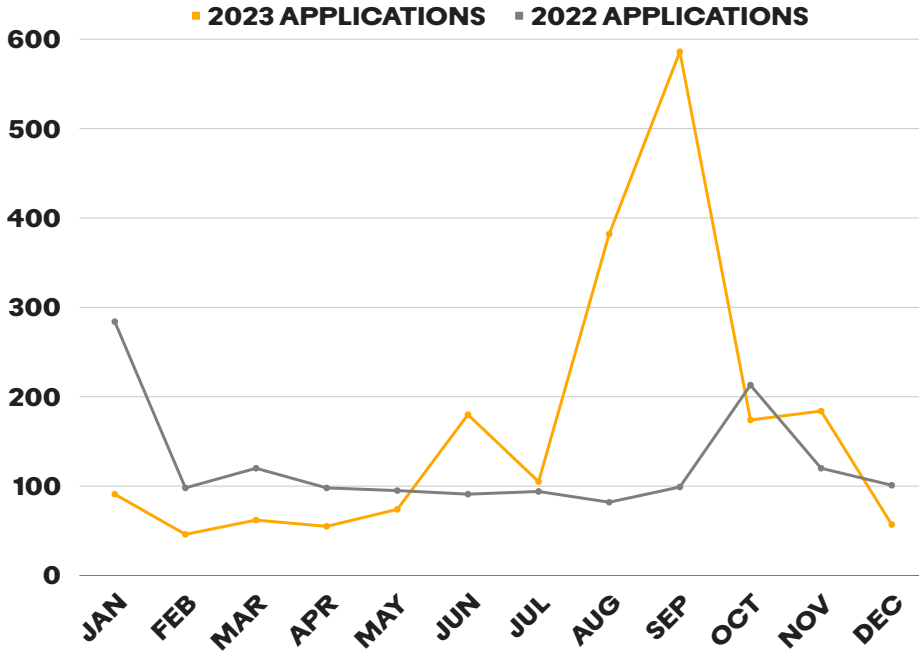
TOP FUNDED STATES



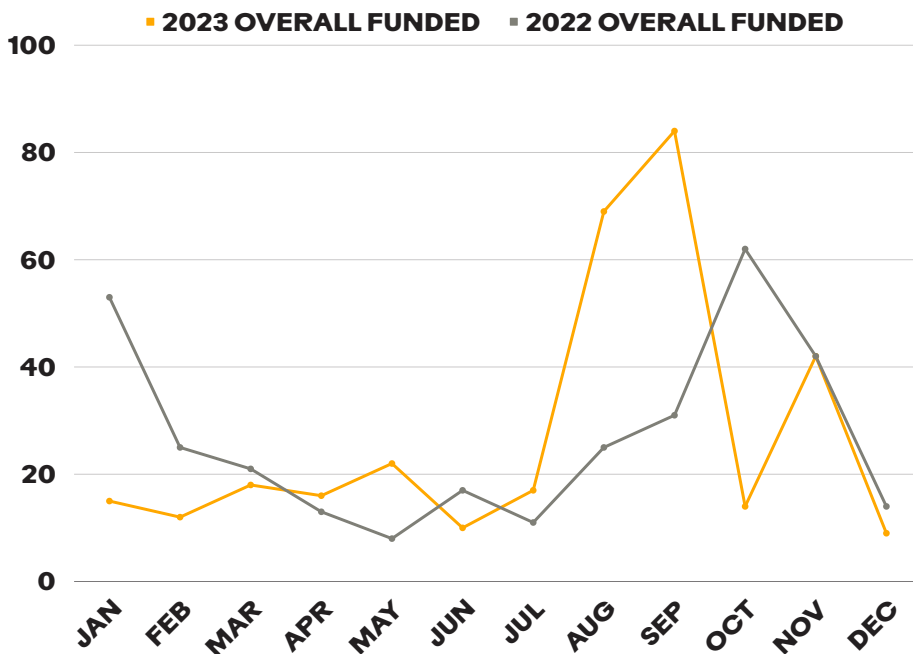
“We are settled in our new apartment. It’s funny, the first thing we cooked on our first night was pizza and hot dogs, and I haven’t seen the kids so happy that I cried that night in bed. I would like to thank you and the organization that you work for. I’m glad that I didn’t give up on finding help for us.”

FAST FOOD CREW MEMBER & TRAINER, TX

TOTAL APPLICATIONS



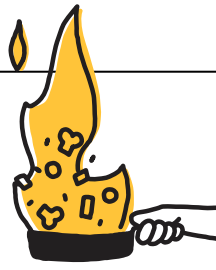
INDIVIDUALS FUNDED



“I just wanted to take a minute to thank you and everyone involved in this program! Y’all are amazing! I will never be able to express how grateful I am. My son and I were able to keep our home because of y’all and all the people that support/donate. His 1st birthday is the 28th of this month and now I don’t have to worry about him having a roof over his head! Thank you all, from the bottom of my heart.”

RESTAURANT MANAGER, NC



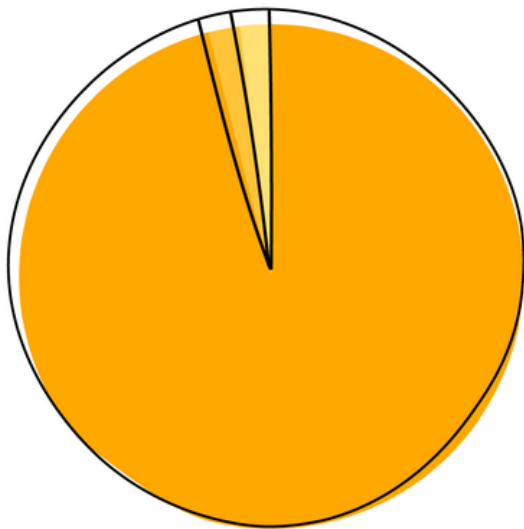


SPOTLIGHT: DISASTER RELIEF

This year, among the top reported crises we helped with were changes in circumstances such as sudden restaurant closures, fires, medical emergencies, and natural disasters. When fires blazed through the island of Maui, we responded to a great need from F+B workers, many of whom lost everything.

IN 2023, SOUTHERN SMOKE FOUNDATION GRANTED \$310,565 TO 144 FOOD AND BEVERAGE WORKERS IN CRISIS DUE TO NATURAL DISASTER, AN 80% INCREASE FROM 2022.

DISASTERS FUNDED



- Maui Fires: 96%
- Hurricane Ian: 2%
- Hurricane Fiona: 2%

HAWAII RECAP

\$283,500

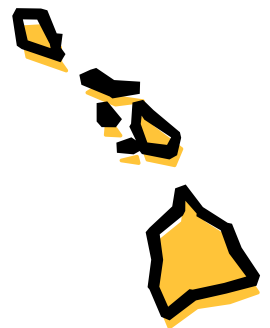
Distributed to Maui F+B workers

135

Awardees

550+

Remaining waitlist



MAJOR SUPPORTERS:



\$80,000

Received from Chef Hui

\$25,000

Received from Tito's Handmade Vodka

BEHIND YOU

No-Cost Mental
Health Services
for F+B Workers



2023 OVERVIEW

1.8K +

No-cost counseling sessions provided

171

Individuals impacted

40%

Expansion of our services from 2022 to 2023

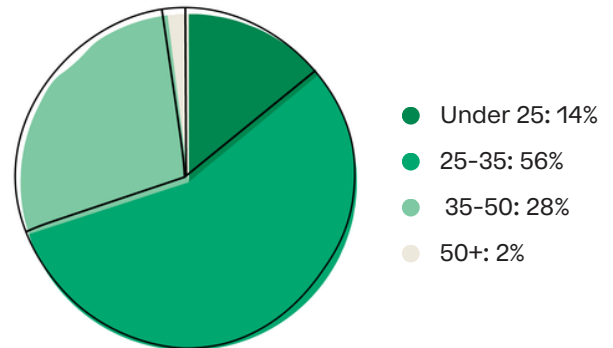
12

Participants' average number of years in the industry

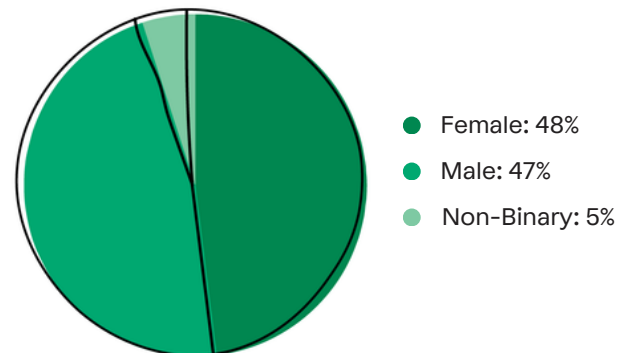
TOP CHALLENGES

- Depression
- After-work substance abuse
- PTSD
- Work-related anxiety
- Work-related burnout

AGE BREAKDOWN



GENDER BREAKDOWN



TOP POSITIONS

Bartender | Server | Manager | Cook | Chef

GROWTH RECAP

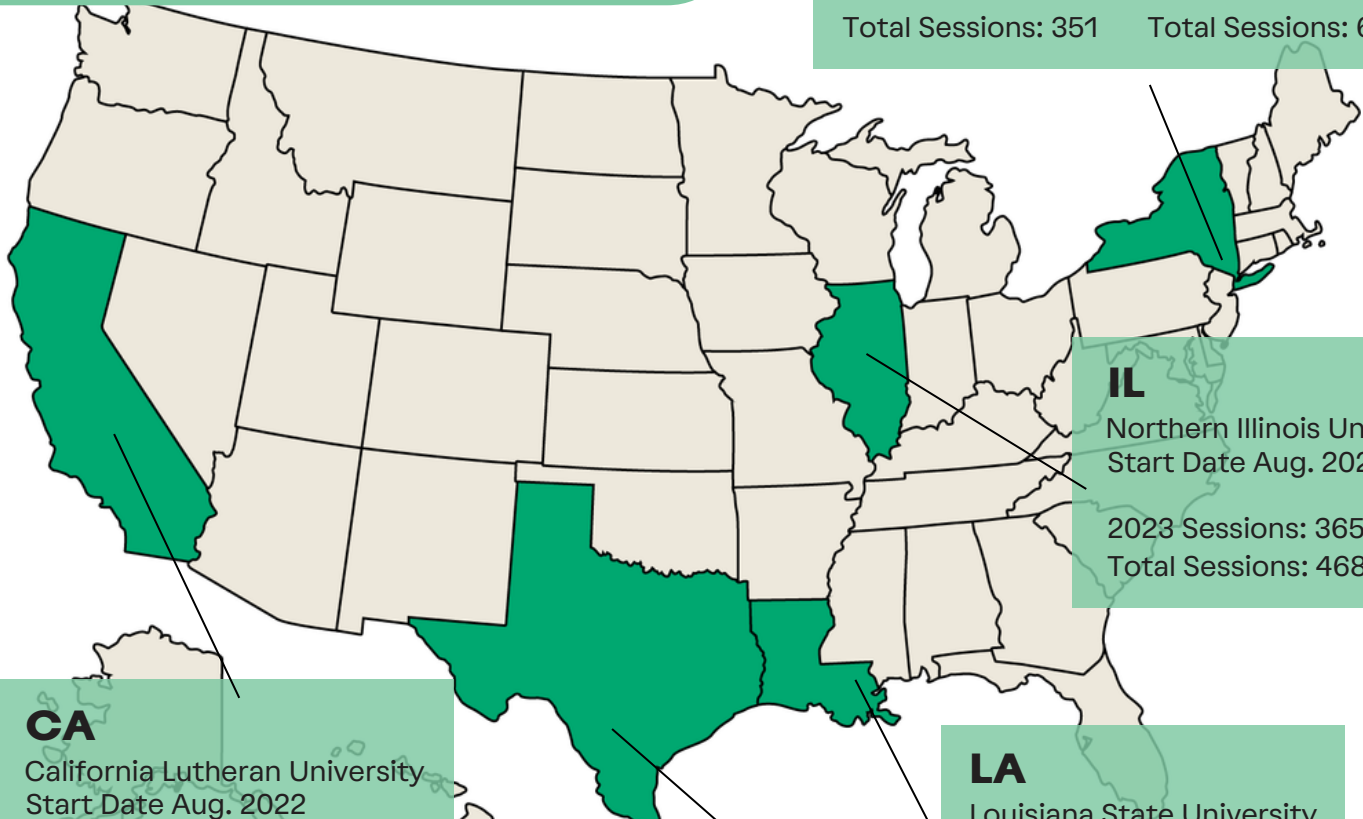
This year, we increased our services by 40% and launched two university partnerships in New York, offering 900 additional counseling sessions. To expand accessibility to services, *Behind You* introduced new guidelines offering 20 no-cost counseling sessions or six months of services, whichever is reached first, for each SSF client. Each university partner commits to seeing 20 individuals simultaneously, impacting approximately 40-60 individuals per contract term.

SESSIONS BY STATE

NY

Yeshiva University Start Date Mar. 2023
New York University Start Date Sep. 2023

Total Sessions: 351 Total Sessions: 60



CA

California Lutheran University
Start Date Aug. 2022

2023 Sessions: 183
Total Sessions: 228

TX

University of Houston
Start Date Aug. 2020

2023 Sessions: 659
Total Sessions: 2,838

IL

Northern Illinois University
Start Date Aug. 2022

2023 Sessions: 365
Total Sessions: 468

LA

Louisiana State University
Start Date Aug. 2022

2023 Sessions: 259
Total Sessions: 308

2023 BEHIND YOU PARTNERS

Southern Smoke Foundation distributes grants to accredited universities offering a graduate-level program for psychology, social work, clinical mental health, or counseling thanks to the support of the following organizations:

National:

- Athletic Brewing Co.
- H-E-B
- Love, Tito's
- Restaurant Giving Circle

California:

- Robert M. Sinskey Foundation

New York:

- BentoBox
- ROAR
- Resy

WHY IS IT WORKING? A WORD FROM OUR PARTNER.

1. “The name of the program is *Behind You*, a common phrase workers say in a kitchen, and the Foundation has moved the concept of “behind you” from the kitchen to the therapy room. You know in your kitchens and patients know in the therapy room who is behind you.

2. You can’t have a restaurant or a therapeutic relationship without the concept of a team. Food and beverage workers know what it’s like to be on a team. When referrals come for therapy, they are with a clinician in training, a crisis team, a clinical team, a technology team.

We see substance abuse, depression, and anxiety, but one of the things we noticed that was unique to the food and beverage industry was real issues around time and time management. If you’re working two jobs and have a family, time is your enemy. We are addressing a need.

Everyone who has started in the program has continued. There is high turnover in both food and beverage and therapy, and we don’t have that in the *Behind You* program.”

DR. WILLIAM SALTON, CLINICAL PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY, YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

“Working with the community clinic has changed my life drastically. The scheduling is convenient, so that I can easily commit to my betterment program. I feel like I’m receiving a thorough and attentive evaluation and that I’ve been able to reach my goals so much faster with this program. I’ve made personal progress in my sobriety, and relationship progress with boundaries and healthier communication. I received a professional diagnosis that led to a more customized therapy plan. I plan to be in therapy as long as the program is provided as I care very much about making a better future. Thank you for giving me a chance and thank you for changing my life path.”

SERVER, TX

2023 EVENTS

We bring the party wherever we go, working with our outstanding partners to help raise awareness of our mission. Here's how we've done that over the past year:

ROAR BLOCK PARTY AT HOMETOWN BAR-B-QUE

Brooklyn, NY | 5.13.23

We celebrated *Behind You* with partners ROAR and Yeshiva University.

HOT LUCK LIVE FOOD AND MUSIC

Austin, TX | 5.25.23-5.28.23

Hosted by Aaron Franklin, with proceeds going to Southern Smoke Foundation.

40TH ANNUAL FOOD & WINE CLASSIC IN ASPEN

Aspen, CO | 6.16.23-6.18.23

Southern Smoke Foundation was a beneficiary of Food & Wine's epic weekend in the mountains.

LIVE FIRE SERIES: FARMSTEAD AT LONG MEADOW RANCH

Napa, CA | 7.21.23

Chris Shepherd and chef Stephen Barber collaborated on a feast in wine country.

WHO TAKES CARE OF US? INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

New York, NY | 9.19.23

We hosted an industry roundtable with Yeshiva University and ROAR in partnership with Resy.

FAVOR X SHAKE SHACK

Texas | 10.23

Favor and Shake Shack partnered to donate a total of \$50,000 to the Southern Smoke Foundation. As part of the effort, they also pledged to donate \$1 to Southern Smoke for every Shake Shack order placed on the Favor Delivery app for the month of October.

RESPECT THE ROSÉ

Houston, TX | 10.13.23

We welcomed guests to the beautiful Four Seasons Hotel Houston for a 007-themed bash benefitting Southern Smoke Foundation.

ELIJAH CRAIG OLD FASHIONED WEEK

Nationwide | 10.13.23-10.22.23

Southern Smoke Foundation was the charity beneficiary of Elijah Craig Old Fashioned Week 2023.

HOMESTATE PRESENTS THE FRANKLIN: THE BEST BREAKFAST TACO ON THE PLANET

Los Angeles, CA | 11.8.23-11.12.23

A limited edition breakfast taco in collaboration with HomeState, Franklin BBQ, and Vital Farms. A portion of proceeds from sales was donated to Southern Smoke Foundation.



SOUTHERN SMOKE FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY ALASKA SEAFOOD + YETI

SSF23 was our biggest fundraising event yet, raising \$1.8 million for food and beverage workers in crisis nationwide.

On October 14, 2023, more than 3,500 attendees filed into Discovery Green in Downtown Houston for a day of eating, drinking, and throwing down for a great cause, set to the soundtrack of grooves from Nashville Yacht Club, DJ-G Funk, Blue Heron Yacht Club, and Mariachi Amor A México.

Over 60 of America's top chefs brought their A-game, dazzling us with their amazing bites.

3,500+

Attendees

60+

Chefs

11

States represented by our SSF23 Chefs

16

Cities represented by our SSF23 Chefs

A photograph of a man with glasses and a blue shirt speaking into a microphone on a stage. He is surrounded by a large, diverse crowd of people who are clapping and watching him. The scene is set at night with stage lighting and a festive atmosphere.

\$1.8 MILLION

RAISED AT SOUTHERN SMOKE FESTIVAL 2023

“When I started talking openly about all of this in my own life, then in a public way in my book about anxiety, and then to the industry via Chefs With Issues and public and private talks so long ago, it often felt like I was screaming into the void. It often felt lonely and scary, even while I knew exactly how lucky I was to be able to both talk about it openly, and have the platform to do so. With people from Southern Smoke, ROAR, Yeshiva University, and so many industry-born organizations out there raising money, knocking down barriers, holding hands, and caring the way that only people called to hospitality can do, now it feels like a choir. And it's beautiful.”

KAT KINSMAN

Food & Wine Pro Newsletter

Major Media Spotlights

PLATE MAGAZINE

Want to Provide Healthcare For Your Whole Team? You Have Options.

RESY BLOG

‘Who Takes Care of Us?’ A Candid Discussion About Mental Health in the Hospitality Industry

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Ahead of West Maui’s reopening, Houston chef Chris Shepherd’s nonprofit helps restaurant workers

KPRC-TV

How a renowned local chef is (successfully) aiming to change the lives of hospitality workers nationwide

THE TIMES PICAYUNE

Anthony Bourdain’s death spurred free mental health support for local hospitality workers

WORTH MAGAZINE

Worthy 100 2023: Chris Shepherd

TEXAS MONTHLY

“I’m Starting to Become Numb to This”: Texas Restaurant Workers Speak Up About Mental Health in Their Industry

OUR 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.

Acqua Panna/San Pellegrino

Alaska Seafood

Alicynn Fink

Amanda McMillian and Benjamin Holloway

American Express/ Resy

Anchor CM

Aperol

Athletic Brewing Co.

Ben E. Keith

Benjamin and Jennifer Fink

BentoBox

Brock Bly

Brugal

Carlos Wheelock

Cayson

Central Market

Chef Hui

Chubo Knives

Crown Royal

Duke's Mayonnaise

Edward Fisher

Electrolit

Elijah Craig

Favor

Fifth Generation Inc

Four Seasons Hotel Houston

French Truck Coffee

Fuckalogo

Gee Eye Care

Gozney

H-E-B

Houston Hospitality Alliance

IMA

Jordan Singer

Kaitlyn Khatib

Lexus

Love, Tito's | Tito's Handmade Vodka

Martin's Barbecue LLC

Mirta Seijo

MISE Footwear

National Christian Foundation

Nütrl

Petter Pettersen and Mari Mena

ParTech, Inc

Patrick Wiley

Randi Revisore

Restaurant Giving Circle Inc.

Robert Mondavi Winery

Robert Mosher

Skadden

Stella Artois

Steve and Natalie Mohtashami

SwiftCurrent, LLC.

Sysco

Tabasco

Table22

Tavel Bristol-Joseph

Teremana Tequila

The Meredith Corporation Foundation

The Robert M. Sinskey Foundation

The Roots Fund

Underberg

Vanessa and Chuck Ames

Victoria Gutierrez and Nick Pierce

Vital Farms

Vitol Foundation

YETI

Zachary Matula



LEADERSHIP



We are incredibly grateful for the leadership and expertise the following individuals bring to the table.

LEADERSHIP

Lindsey Brown

Executive Director

Cris Tang

Chief Financial Officer

Catarina Bill

Chief Mission Officer

Victoria Dearmond

Special Events and Operations
Director

Caroline Nabors

Director of Development
and Marketing

Matthew Pridgen

Beverage Director

2023 BOARD

Chris Shepherd

Founding Director and
Honorary Chairman

Kevin Gee

Vice President

Benjamin Fink

Chairman, Finance
Committee

Chree Boydston

Member

Ikimi Dubose

Member

June Rodil

Member

Petter Pettersen

President

Martha Paterson

Secretary

LeighAnn Bakunas

Member

John deBary

Member

Aaron Franklin

Member

THANK YOU!

As a crisis relief organization, we are continuously humbled by the brave spirit of food and beverage workers nationwide surviving through the worst of times. Natural disasters like hurricanes and wildfires, accidents and unexpected emergencies, have all threatened the lives and livelihoods of individuals in the food and beverage industry, and yet all we see are courage and strength.

For 2024, we're determined to help even more individuals in the food and beverage industry nationwide. Remember, no crisis is too big and no challenge is too great for us. We're also excited to forge new partnerships nationwide as we seek to make the greatest impact. On behalf of Southern Smoke Foundation and the Board of Directors, thank you helping support the nation's food and beverage industry.

