



**For Immediate Release:** January 5, 2021

## **EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES “RAISING THE BAR” RESTAURANT RECOVERY FUND**

***More Than \$3 Million in Grant Funding Available through Financial Support Led by Diageo North America and Supported by Coastal Pacific Wine & Spirits, and implemented by the National Development Council***

***Eligible Restaurants Can Receive up to \$5,000 to Assist with COVID-19 Safety Measures***

Empire State Development (ESD) today announced the more than \$3 million “Raising the Bar” Restaurant Recovery Fund to assist restaurants in New York State during the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant funding has been made possible through financial donations led by Diageo North America and supported by Coastal Pacific Wine & Spirits (a division of Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits) and will be implemented by the non-profit National Development Council (NDC). The “Raising the Bar Restaurant Recovery Fund” will help eligible restaurants adjust their operations to the impacts of COVID-19 and adherence to New York State’s public health and safety measures during the winter months when outdoor dining is limited.

**Empire State Development Acting Commissioner, and President & CEO-designate Eric Gertler said,** “The restaurant industry is a critical component of our state’s economy - encompassing hundreds of small businesses who employ thousands of New Yorkers. This industry has been among the hardest hit by the devastating effects of COVID-19, working hard to stay open, serve customers and keep employees safe. This fund is designed to help establishments adapt during this unprecedented time with assistance to sustain their businesses during the winter months to come.”

“Raising the Bar” grant funding can be used for COVID-19-related improvements and equipment that will allow the business to comply with social distancing guidelines, expand take-out/delivery operations, or accommodate outdoor dining such as plexiglass barriers/partitions, signage promoting social distancing and hygiene protocols, heaters, heat lamps, weatherization upgrades and insulated delivery bags; improvements that will allow the business to continue operating through the winter months such as filtration system upgrades and food heaters to maintain temperature for to-go orders and purchasing PPE and sanitation supplies necessitated by the pandemic; and COVID-19 related business improvements like patio heaters or contactless technology. Qualifying purchases and expenditures must be from September 1, 2020 onwards to be eligible. Initial round of grants are up to \$5,000.

Initial grant funding will be awarded based on the received applications and dispersed independently by NDC, an experienced national economic non-profit that has been in operation since 1969.

“Diageo is committed to supporting restaurant owners, particularly those in underrepresented communities, who have been disproportionately harmed by COVID-19,” **said Debra Crew, President,**

**Diageo North America.** “We are honored to serve as a founding contributor of the ‘Raising the Bar’ Restaurant Recovery Fund, providing much needed relief to an important industry that serves as a vital part of the economic engine of local communities. We encourage other organizations and businesses that also call New York ‘home’ to join us in this endeavor to make the impact of the program even stronger.”

“The hospitality industry in New York needs help now more than ever and we are here for them like they’ve always been here for us,” **commented Wayne E. Chaplin, Chief Executive Officer, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits.** “The Raising the Bar Restaurant Recovery Fund provides an essential lifeline to restaurant owners so they can continue to operate safely, and stay afloat during this critical time. We are proud that our Coastal Pacific Wine & Spirits division is working with the State of New York, our valued supplier, Diageo, and the NDC to provide this much needed and urgent financial support.”

"At NDC, we are eager to get moving on this restaurant grant program," **said Dan Marsh, President of National Development Council.** "Having worked on numerous loan and grant programs in New York and across the country, what we have seen is that smaller restaurants -- especially minority and woman-owned establishments and those in hard-hit neighborhoods -- are not getting the help they really need. A tailored grant program specific to this industry is critical."

Eligible businesses consist of New York State restaurants that have no more than \$3 million in 2019 revenue and are engaged in providing food services and meals prepared on-premises to patrons who traditionally order and are served while seated, including certain on-premises food and drinking establishments licensed through the State Liquor Authority (SLA) and which need funding to adjust to COVID-related impacts and protocols. Establishments providing take out or grab and go food services due to COVID-19 restrictions are also eligible to receive the grant from NDC. Additionally, these establishments must have been in operation on or before March 1, 2019 and certify and demonstrate that they have experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19. All businesses must continue to comply with the [New York Forward](#) reopening guidance and [Cluster Action Initiative](#) guidance, as applicable. Restaurants can apply to the “Raising the Bar Restaurant Recovery Fund” starting Monday, January 11, 2021. For more information visit the ESD website at <https://esd.ny.gov/raising-bar-restaurant-recovery-fund>. Applications will begin to be accepted on Jan. 11, 2021.

### **About Empire State Development**

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York’s chief economic development agency. The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo’s Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State’s iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, please visit [www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov](http://www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov) and [www.esd.ny.gov](http://www.esd.ny.gov).

### **About Diageo North America**

Diageo is a global leader in beverage alcohol with an outstanding collection of brands including Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, Bulleit and Buchanan's whiskies, Smirnoff, Cîroc and Ketel One vodkas, Captain Morgan, Baileys, Casamigos, Don Julio, Tanqueray and Guinness.

Diageo is listed on both the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: DEO) and the London Stock Exchange (LSE: DGE) and their products are sold in more than 180 countries around the world. For more information about Diageo, their people, brands, and performance, visit [www.diageo.com](http://www.diageo.com). Visit Diageo's global responsible drinking resource, [www.DRINKiQ.com](http://www.DRINKiQ.com), for information, initiatives, and ways to share best practice. Follow at Twitter and Instagram for news and information about Diageo North America: @Diageo\_NA.

### **About Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits**

Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits is the world's pre-eminent distributor of beverage alcohol, and proud to be a multi-generational, family-owned company. The Company has operations in 44 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Canada. Southern Glazer's urges all retail customers and adult consumers to market, sell, serve, and enjoy its products responsibly. For more information visit [www.southernglazers.com](http://www.southernglazers.com). Follow us on Twitter and Instagram @sgwinespirits and on Facebook at Facebook.com/SouthernGlazers.

### **About NDC**

NDC is a national economic development nonprofit that directs capital and financial expertise to local communities, governments, and agencies. NDC supports the development and preservation of affordable housing; creates jobs through small business lending; advances livable communities with social infrastructure investment; and builds capacity through hands-on training and technical assistance in all areas of economic development. Founded in 1969, NDC continues to evolve and innovate to meet the needs of today's challenges. Find us at [ndconline.org](http://ndconline.org) @NatIDevCouncil