



**For Immediate Release**  
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**Massachusetts Conference for Women, Massachusetts Restaurant Association  
and Chef Joanne Chang Join to Announce \$250,000 Initiative to Support Women-  
Owned Restaurants**

Chef and restaurateur Joanne Chang has joined the [Massachusetts Conference for Women](#) and the [Massachusetts Restaurant Association](#) (MRA) to announce a new \$250,000 initiative to award grants to dozens of women-owned restaurants across Massachusetts to assist women in an industry that has been devastated by COVID-19.

The Massachusetts Conference for Women will donate funds to provide \$5,000 grants to 50 women-owned Massachusetts restaurants, which will be selected via an application process by the Massachusetts Restaurant Association. Restaurants can apply [here](#) or online via the MRA website until October 22.

“Restaurants truly are the heart of our communities, where people can find comfort at a time when we all need to be able to enjoy some of our favorite traditions such as enjoying a special meal,” said Chang, owner of Flour Bakery in Boston and Cambridge, cookbook author and a James Beard Foundation Award winner for Outstanding Baker. “This initiative will allow a number of women in this hard-hit industry to thrive and provide nourishment to their communities.”

The nonpartisan, nonprofit Massachusetts Conference for Women has been committed to promoting gender equality and to amplifying the influence of women in the workplace and beyond for 16 years. This year, women are disproportionately shouldering the economic impacts of COVID-19 due to mass layoffs in industries that employ many

women such as hospitality and retail, increased caregiving responsibilities, and a devastating impact on women-owned small businesses.

“The Massachusetts Conference for Women strives to elevate women in business and all areas of life,” said Massachusetts Conference for Women Board President Gloria Larson. “Our mission is to promote equality, amplify the voices of women and our allies, and foster community. Helping women-owned restaurants that have been impacted by COVID is directly in line with this mission and our efforts to promote women helping women.”

Massachusetts restaurants employed 300,000 people in March 2020, but over 255,000 people have been furloughed during the shutdown and today 39 percent have yet to be recalled.

“This partnership will make a substantive difference for working women in the restaurant industry, which has suffered so deeply from COVID-19. We are thrilled that the Massachusetts Conference for Women is making this initiative possible to help women-owned businesses succeed and thrive,” said Bob Luz, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Restaurant Association.

The virtual 2020 Massachusetts Conference for Women on December 10<sup>th</sup> will feature speakers including Awkwafina, a Golden Globe-winning actress and producer; Doris Kearns Goodwin, a presidential historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author; Rachel Cargle, an activist, academic, and prominent voice on race and feminism; and Stephanie Land, an economic justice advocate and author of the best-selling book *Maid*. The interactive Conference also will give attendees opportunities to engage with speakers and each other, support women-owned businesses in a virtual exhibit hall, and participate in career coaching and resume reviews.

The Massachusetts Conference for Women 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.maconferenceforwomen.org>. To apply for media credentials to cover the 2020 Massachusetts Conference for Women, please complete [this form](#).

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