



March 25, 2021

The Honorable Rob Fairweather
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th St., NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Acting Director Fairweather,

I write today on behalf of the more than 500,000 independent restaurants and bars across the country and the more than 110,000 that have closed throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been working with Capitol Hill and recently the Small Business Administration (SBA) to create and stand up the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF) from the recently passed American Rescue Plan. This desperately needed \$28.6 billion is set to be spread among independent restaurants and bars and we must ensure that the funds that are distributed get to the restaurants and other food service businesses that need it the most, especially when this amount of money isn't enough to cover the needs of the entire industry.

With the strong support of the Biden Administration, Congress created an unprecedented grant program, both in size and scope, to help independent bars and restaurants. We are grateful for the Administration's efforts to date quickly stand up this program and get grants in the hands of those who need them most.

The use of SAM.gov for the administration of the RRF is cumbersome for independent restaurants and bars desperate for relief. This platform works well for a number of large and sophisticated companies that have contracts with the federal government, but local restaurants and bars are smaller organizations who lack the time or know-how to successfully complete the SAM registration process. Independent restaurants and bars do not need an ongoing financial relationship with the federal government, unlike the contractors and consultants that rely on the SAM process for recurring payments.

Between notarized letters, multiple business registrations, lack of multilingual support, lack of professional advisors, and many other complications, small and independent restaurants and bars will not be able to successfully navigate this system that was designed for repeat grant awardees and much larger organizations. Requiring users to go through SAM.gov is tying the hands of many of the smallest and most vulnerable members of our community, leaving larger and more capable restaurant groups to access funding.

Our community very much appreciates the work the Biden Administration is doing now, especially at the SBA, to make sure this program is accessible as possible. Eliminating the use of SAM.gov would be another massive step in this direction.

We look forward to working with you and the Biden Administration to roll out the RRF and ensure the funds are accessible to the neighborhood restaurants and bars who need it most.

Sincerely,

Erika Polmar
Executive Director, Independent Restaurant Coalition