



# **Duckworth Urges SBA To Assist Minority Owners Shut Out Of Restaurant Revitalization Fund**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) is calling for more assistance for minority owned-businesses as they recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19. In a letter to Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Isabel Guzman, Duckworth asked Guzman to use any and all available authorities to assist the more than 2,900 women-, minority- and Veteran-owned small businesses that were denied Restaurant Revitalization Fund assistance that Congress intended for them to receive. In a separate letter, Duckworth also [called for](#) more small business relief funding, especially for minority-owned small businesses, to be included in any Build Back Better legislation.

“I know the relief intended for these restaurant owners has been stymied by an effort outside of your control and that you are thoroughly committed to assisting small businesses who have been injured during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Duckworth wrote. “I will continue to advocate for Congress to step in and provide additional small business relief as we move forward. Nevertheless, I strongly support the SBA using any authority possible to advance the relief programs that Congress has already authorized.”

The American Rescue Plan created the Restaurant Revitalization Fund to provide more than \$28 billion for struggling restaurants. The legislation also required the SBA to prioritize applications from women-, minority- and Veteran-owned small businesses. A recent lawsuit against SBA claimed this prioritization was discriminatory, and a federal judge in Texas issued an injunction preventing SBA from distributing RRF funds to nearly 3,000 minority small business owners whose funding had already been approved. These small businesses are now locked out of the program and cannot access the much-needed recovery funding.

As a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Duckworth has been a strong advocate for supporting small business throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including [securing](#) \$57 million for the U.S. Small Business Administration’s microloan program to support more minority-owned small businesses in the December 2020 COVID-19 relief legislation.

Full text of the letter is available [here](#) and below.

Dear Administrator Guzman:

I am writing to express my support for the Small Business Administration (SBA) using any and all powers available under existing authority to assist the many restaurant owners who have been shut out of the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF).

As you know, more than 2,900 restaurant owners who applied for and were approved for relief through the RRF have been denied assistance through no fault of their own. These are restaurant owners who applied during the priority window, which Congress enacted to encourage additional assistance to women-, minority-, and Veteran-owned small businesses. The outcome these particular business owners face is inexcusable, and there are even more restaurant owners beyond this population who are also facing the reality of no relief through the RRF.

I know the relief intended for these restaurant owners has been stymied by an effort outside of your control and that you are thoroughly committed to assisting small businesses who have been injured during the COVID-19 pandemic. I will continue to advocate for Congress to step in and provide additional small business relief as we move forward. Nevertheless, I strongly support the SBA using any authority possible to advance the relief programs that Congress has already authorized.

I stand ready to work with you in any capacity in this endeavor. I sincerely appreciate your attention to this matter, and your continued leadership in helping our Nation's small businesses build back better.