



July 27, 2022

The Honorable Isabella Casillas Guzman  
Administrator  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 3rd St, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Administrator Guzman:

On behalf of the National Restaurant Association and our state partners throughout the country, I write regarding the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF), a critical program recovery program for an industry devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under your leadership, the program has provided relief for over 100,000 restaurant owners, but as you are aware, over 177,000 applicants are desperately waiting for word on whether they will ever receive funding.

The potential for replenishing the RRF remains uncertain at best, thus the efficient disbursement of the existing funds is of critical importance to our industry. Restaurants remain battered with worker shortages, runaway food costs, and an uncertain level of customer confidence in the coming months. The need for relief has not abated.

Earlier this month, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) [released a report](#) assessing the RRF. GAO noted that the SBA has yet to disburse \$180 million in RRF funds to applicants, noting the following:

As of June 2022, \$180 million of RRF funding was unobligated, according to USASpending.gov. According to SBA officials, the unobligated funding includes \$24 million set aside for litigation, and the remainder results from realized or anticipated recoveries. SBA data also indicate that about \$56 million came from returned awards (officials said that awards were returned by the recipients or their financial institutions). SBA officials said some of the recovered funds also came from awards the Department of the Treasury administratively offset and returned to SBA.

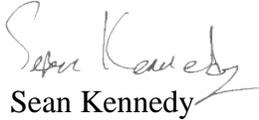
The *American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021* does not create a \$24 million litigation set aside for the SBA to administer. While ARPA does direct returned or reclaimed RRF awards to the Department of Treasury, it would be consistent with the spirit of the law to utilize all unobligated funds to address the RRF shortfall. As you know, legislation to replenish the RRF passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support, and narrowly failed to secure 60 votes in the Senate. Providing relief to restaurants is a bipartisan effort stretching back to the earliest days of COVID-related shutdowns and capacity restrictions.

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Now more than ever, every dollar appropriated by Congress for restaurant relief needs to be unlocked and put in the hands of operators struggling to keep their doors open. We urge the SBA to take every step to disburse all remaining funds in a fair and timely manner.

Thank you for your continued work for the small business restaurants that are the backbone of this country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean Kennedy". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sean Kennedy  
Executive Vice President for Public Affairs