



## Sustain and Serve NJ Frequently Asked Questions

*Last Updated December 22, 2020*

### 1. What is Sustain and Serve NJ?

Sustain and Serve NJ is a \$2 million grant program administered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA). The program will provide grants of a minimum of \$100,000 to eligible entities. The funding will be used to support prospective costs associated with the bulk purchasing of meals from New Jersey-based restaurants negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The meals must be distributed at no cost and cannot be resold.

### 2. How do applicants apply for Sustain and Serve NJ?

Applicants can find the Sustain and Serve NJ application on the New Jersey COVID-19 Business Hub: <https://business.nj.gov/covid/is-my-business-eligible-for-the-sustain-and-serve-program?locale=en>.

All applications and supporting documentation must be received by **January 8, 2021**.

Applications for Sustain and Serve NJ are completed in **three parts**:

- 1) Applicants are first required to submit an application that includes listing proposed restaurants for meal purchases;
- 2) Listed restaurants will then receive a short form directly from NJEDA they must complete if they wish to be eligible for meal purchases through Sustain and Serve NJ; and
- 3) Applicants are sent the restaurant submission to review and approve before it is sent to NJEDA. Approvals must be completed by the application deadline for consideration for meal purchase reimbursement through Sustain and Serve NJ.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring restaurants have submitted materials by the application deadline. Applicants should allow sufficient time for submission of both their and listed restaurants' materials.

### 3. Who is eligible for Sustain and Serve NJ?

The program will be open to any public or private entity that is **not** a restaurant or similar entity classified under NAICS code 722, including 501(c) non-profit organizations, that:

- ✓ Has purchased more than 3,000 meals at a total cost of no less than \$50,000, from New Jersey-based restaurants, between March 9, 2020 and December 16, 2020;
- ✓ Is legally registered to do business in New Jersey as evidenced by a valid NJ Business Registration Certificate; and
- ✓ Is in good standing with the New Jersey Department of Labor and can provide a tax clearance certificate from the New Jersey Division of Taxation prior to execution of the grant agreement.

Applicants will be required to submit supporting documentation to verify compliance with the listed eligibility criteria:

- Invoices and/or receipts verifying at least 3,000 meal purchases valued at no less than \$50,000;

- New Jersey Business Registration Certificate which may be obtained at <https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/revenue/gettingregistered.shtml>; and
- Tax Clearance Certification from the Division of Taxation, in the Department of the Treasury which may be obtained at <https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/busasst.shtml>.

#### **4. Can restaurants apply directly for funding from Sustain and Serve NJ?**

Restaurants or other entities classified under NAICS code 722 **may not** directly apply for this grant.

Restaurants interested in providing meals for Sustain and Serve NJ grant recipients may opt to have their information posted publicly on the Sustain and Serve NJ page on the NJ COVID-19 Business Information Hub by filling out this [form](#). The information provided in this form will be publicly [posted](#) and accessible by all potential applicants. Potential grant applicants may choose to refer to this registry and contact you about participating in the Sustain and Serve NJ program. Inclusion in the registry does not mean that you are eligible to participate, or that you will be contacted.

As part of their application, the grant applicants will identify to NJEDA the restaurant or restaurants from which they will be purchasing meals with the grant funding. Restaurants participating in Sustain and Serve NJ must have:

- ✓ 50 or fewer employees (based on the restaurant's most recently filed WR-30 with NJDOL);
- ✓ A physical commercial location in New Jersey;
- ✓ Legal registration to do business in New Jersey as evidenced by a valid New Jersey Business Registration Certificate
- ✓ Good standing with the New Jersey Department of Labor and New Jersey Division of Taxation;
- ✓ Good standing with the New Jersey Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (where applicable);
- ✓ Valid certification from municipal or county government inspection showing a current rating of Satisfactory per the New Jersey Retail Food Establishment Rating system;
- ✓ Restaurants must certify that they have been negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19; and were in operation on February 15, 2020.

Restaurants listed by Sustain and Serve NJ applicants must submit the following materials to be considered eligible for reimbursement for meal purchases through Sustain and Serve NJ:

- Form attesting that the restaurant was in operation on February 15, 2020, and has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 declared state of emergency on March 9, 2020. After the applicant submits their application, this form will be sent by NJEDA directly to listed restaurants.
- New Jersey Business Registration Certificate which may be obtained at <https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/revenue/gettingregistered.shtml>; and
- Current and valid certification from municipal and/or county government inspection that the restaurant has received a rating of Satisfactory as per New Jersey Retail Food Establishment Rating system.

#### **5. How much funding can I receive from Sustain and Serve NJ?**

NJEDA will make up to \$2 million of funding available for Sustain and Serve NJ. Eligible entities can receive grants of a minimum of \$100,000 to support prospective costs associated with the bulk purchasing of meals from New Jersey-based restaurants.

#### **6. Are governments or other public entities eligible to apply?**



Please see question 3, “Who is eligible for Sustain and Serve NJ?”

**7. What are the qualifications for participating restaurants?**

Please see question 4, “Can restaurants apply for funding from Sustain and Serve NJ?” for eligibility criteria.

**8. How many restaurants can a grantee work with?**

There is no limit on the number of restaurants a Sustain and Serve NJ grantee may purchase meals from. However, grantees may only receive reimbursement for purchases from restaurants that meet all eligibility criteria, detailed in question 4.

**9. Are applicants required to list the restaurants they want to purchase meals from in my application?**

Yes. Applicants are required to list all restaurants they wish to purchase meals from with Sustain and Serve NJ funding. After an applicant submits their application, listed restaurants will be sent a short form directly from NJEDA they must complete to verify their eligibility for reimbursement for meal purchases by the application deadline, January 8, 2021. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that listed restaurants complete the form. Applicants will only be eligible for funding if they have at least one restaurant eligible for reimbursement through Sustain and Serve NJ.

If all restaurants do not submit by the application deadline and an applicant is approved for Sustain and Serve NJ, grantees may request restaurants be added after grant execution, subject to approval by NJEDA. Restaurants added after grant execution are subject to the same eligibility criteria detailed in question 4.

**10. Can I add restaurants that I wish to purchase meals from after I apply?**

Grantees may request approval from NJEDA for additional participating restaurants that were not named in the initial application after the execution of the grant agreement. Restaurants added after grant execution are subject to the same eligibility criteria detailed in question 4.

**11. What happens if one of the restaurants listed on an application turns out not to be eligible for Sustain and Serve NJ?**

In order to participate in Sustain and Serve NJ applicants need a minimum of one eligible restaurant. If an applicant lists multiple restaurants and one or more is found to be ineligible, the applicant could still be given a grant award to use with other approved restaurants listed in their application. If a restaurant listed in an application is not eligible for purchases through Sustain and Serve NJ due to a missing document or error, after execution of a grant agreement, grantees may request the restaurant be added by re-submitting all required materials. If a restaurant was denied eligibility on other grounds, awardees may appeal on the restaurant’s behalf. Grantees may request approval from NJEDA for additional participating restaurants that were not named in the initial application after the execution of the grant agreement, subject to approval by NJEDA.

**12. What can Sustain and Serve NJ funds be used for?**

Grant funding from the NJEDA can only be used for prospective costs associated with the bulk purchasing of meals. Specifically, this means any costs incurred between the date of execution of grant agreement, and April 30, 2021. The NJEDA will not provide reimbursements for meals purchased prior to



the execution of a grant agreement with the NJEDA. The NJEDA will not establish specific parameters around who the meals are distributed to, but grantees are prohibited from re-selling any meals purchased with NJEDA grant funding.

Grant funding awarded through Sustain and Serve NJ will be restricted to expenses related to the direct cost of purchasing meals, as determined by participating restaurants. This cost may include the restaurant’s cost of food and ingredients, labor, packaging, facilities, and profit margin. Sales tax and/or gratuity is not an eligible use of grant funds. While the restaurant may charge the grantee recipient any amount, the NJEDA’s grant award amount will be capped at a calculation of \$10 per meal. No other expense incurred by the grantee, whether in support of the meal purchase from the restaurant or otherwise, is eligible.

**13. How do applicants calculate average meal cost for the application?**

Applicants are asked to provide an estimated average cost per meal

**14. How will grant funds be disbursed?**

Sustain and Serve NJ is a reimbursement-based grant. Grant funding will be incrementally disbursed as costs are incurred and demonstrated to the Authority for expenses incurred between the date of grant execution and April 30, 2021. Awardees will be able to submit reimbursement at least once per month on the dates specified below:

<b>Reimbursement Submission Period</b>	<b>For expenses incurred from date of grant execution through</b>
January 28-29, 2021	January 27, 2021
February 15-16, 2021	February 14, 2021
March 15-16, 2021	March 14, 2021
April 12-13, 2021	April 11, 2021
May 27-28, 2021	April 30, 2021

Grantees must submit dated receipts or invoices for reimbursement of at least \$20,000. If expenses incurred are less than \$20,000, the grantee must wait until the next reimbursement period once their expenses total at least \$20,000. Grantees may choose to submit less frequently than once a month, but all expenses must be submitted for reimbursement by May 28, 2021.

**15. Who do the meals have to be distributed to?**

The NJEDA will not establish specific parameters around who the meals are distributed to; grantees are prohibited from re-selling any meals purchased with NJEDA grant funding.

**16. Can Sustain and Serve NJ reimburse grantees for meals they have already purchased and distributed?**

Grant funding from the NJEDA can only be used for prospective costs associated with the bulk purchasing of meals. Specifically, this means any costs incurred between the date of execution of grant agreement, and April 30, 2021. The NJEDA will not provide reimbursements for meals purchased prior to the execution of a grant agreement with the NJEDA.

**17. Can grantees re-sell meals purchased with funds from Sustain and Serve NJ?**

Grantees are prohibited from re-selling any meals purchased with NJEDA grant funding.

**18. Can grantees use Sustain and Serve NJ funds to pay for distribution of meals, other associated program expenses, or organizational costs and overhead?**

See question 12, “What can Sustain and Serve NJ funds be used for?”

**19. When do meals have to be purchased by?**

All expenses must be incurred between the date of grant execution and April 30, 2021.

**20. Is Sustain and Serve NJ funding first come, first served?**

No – there will be a defined application window between December 16, 2020 and January 8, 2021 in which any entity can apply, and the NJEDA will not begin reviewing applications until the deadline has passed and all applications have been received. NJEDA will have the ability to provide grants to any applicant that meets eligibility criteria. However, grant amounts are subject to application volume and awards may be reduced from the initial request at the discretion of NJEDA if total grant requests from eligible entities exceeds \$2 million.

**21. What is a Business Registration Certificate, and how can applicants and restaurants obtain one?**

A Business Registration Certificate (BRC) is a certificate from the New Jersey Department of Treasury Division of Taxation that allows the holder to apply for NJ state grant & tax credit programs, NJ state, county, municipal, public colleges/universities, and public school contracts; and/or an NJ casino license.

To check if you already have a BRC, enter the first four (4) letters of your trade name and your Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at [https://www1.state.nj.us/TYTR\\_BRC/jsp/BRCLoginJsp.jsp](https://www1.state.nj.us/TYTR_BRC/jsp/BRCLoginJsp.jsp). If your firm is registered, you will be able to download certificate immediately.

If your business is not registered, register your business at <https://www.njportal.com/DOR/BusinessRegistration>.

For more details, please see the [Business Registration Certificate Guide](#).

**22. Are certain regions of the state prioritized for Sustain and Serve NJ funding?**

All entities and their restaurant partners that meet eligibility criteria can receive Sustain and Serve NJ funding. There is no regional prioritization for Sustain and Serve NJ.

**23. Who do I contact with additional questions?**

Please contact [SSNJ@njeda.com](mailto:SSNJ@njeda.com) with any additional questions.

*Addendum, December 22, 2020*

**24. How can restaurants connect with potential Sustain and Serve NJ applicants?**

The NJEDA is unable to provide names of potential applicants at this time. If a restaurant is interested in being a Sustain and Serve NJ participating restaurant, they may opt to have their restaurant listed on the Sustain and Serve NJ interested restaurants list by filling out [this form](#). Potential grant applicants may choose to refer to this registry and contact you about participating in the Sustain and Serve NJ program. Inclusion in the registry does not mean that you are eligible to participate, or guarantee that you will be contacted by a potential applicant.

**25. My organization is a company *not* classified under NAICS code 722 that has provided meals through my own company exceeding the eligibility threshold, am I eligible to apply?**

Grantees are not eligible to purchase meals from themselves through Sustain and Serve NJ. Prior meals purchased through an entity that is not classified under NAICS code 722 'Food and Drinking Places' does not satisfy the eligibility requirement. At this time, Sustain and Serve NJ grantees may only purchase from restaurants and other similar entities classified under NAICS code 722.

**26. Is there an anticipated start date for the program?**

All applications will be reviewed and grant determinations will be made after the application deadline of January 8, 2021. Grantees may begin meal purchases after grant execution.

**27. My organization issues gift certificates for meals and then, once redeemed, the restaurants turn them in for reimbursement. Would that be acceptable under this grant?**

Gift certificates are not an eligible cost under Sustain and Serve NJ. Please see question 12 'What can Sustain and Serve NJ funds be used for?' for information about eligible costs through Sustain and Serve NJ.

**28. Would the NJEDA consider a waiver of the requirement that organizations have a past track record of meal purchases of at least 3,000 meals valued at \$50,000 or more since March 9, 2020?**

At this time NJEDA is unable to waive this requirement for the application. Applicants must demonstrate a track record of past meal purchases of at least 3,000 meals valued at \$50,000 or more between March 9, 2020 and December 16, 2020 in order to be eligible for Sustain and Serve NJ funding.

**29. When the restaurants complete the form, does the applicant submit the forms along with the full application, or should each restaurant send these directly to the EDA?**

Restaurant forms will be automatically sent to the email addresses you provide for all listed restaurants in your application. When the restaurant completes the form, it will then be automatically sent to the contact from your organization listed in the application for review and approval validation. Once validated by the applicant, the restaurant materials are then automatically sent to NJEDA as part of your application.

**30. Will responses be reviewed on a rolling basis? Is the application first/come first/served?**

This is **not** first come, first served. All applications will be reviewed after the close of the application period (after January 8, 2021).

**31. My organization does not have a Business Registration Certificate or a Tax Clearance Certificate but these are required fields in the application. Can you advise on how to proceed?**

All applicants, including nonprofit organizations, are required to provide a Business Registration Certificate (BRC) at the time of application. If you need help obtaining a BRC, please see NJEDA's [BRC guide](#) for more on the process of applying for a BRC.

Tax clearance certificates do not need to be included at the time of application, but must be provided prior to grant execution. If you need to obtain a tax clearance certificate, please see the Division of Taxation's guidance on obtaining a tax clearance certificate: <https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/busasst.shtml>.

**32. Can an applicant provide invoices to demonstrate eligibility for Sustain and Serve from restaurants we are not working with currently and/or do not plan to work with through Sustain and Serve NJ?**

Eligibility for Sustain and Serve requires demonstrating meal purchases between March 9, 2020 and December 16, 2020 of at least 3,000 meals valued at \$50,000 or more. For purposes of determining eligibility, as long as an applicant provides invoices demonstrating purchases that meet this eligibility threshold it does not matter if it includes invoices from restaurants that an organization is not currently working with or plans to work with through Sustain and Serve NJ.

**33. Our organization is looking to expand the number of restaurants we are working with in the new year. For new restaurants, do we have to produce any previous receipts or invoices?**

Grant applicants are not obliged to use the restaurants they used in previous efforts. Grant applicants must list in their application the restaurants they will be working with and using potential Sustain and Serve NJ funding awards. All restaurants participating in the Sustain and Serve program must adhere to eligibility criteria outlined in question 4 'Can restaurants apply directly for funding from Sustain and Serve NJ?'

If a grant applicant is seeking additional restaurants, they may reference the SSNJ Interested Restaurants Registry: <https://forms.business.nj.gov/ssnj/restaurants/>. Please note that inclusion on this list is not an endorsement from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority as to eligibility for Sustain and Serve NJ.

**34. What will reporting requirements be for Sustain and Serve NJ?**

In order to be disbursed grant funding, applicants will be required to submit invoices to the NJEDA demonstrating meal purchases equivalent to the amount of disbursement requested. The NJEDA has not identified additional reporting requirements at this time, but reserves the right to request additional documentation related to demonstrate meal purchases, or spot check any participating restaurant's compliance with eligibility criteria during the grant term.