



2025 ISHA AWARDS APPLICATION

OF EXCELLENCE

Entries must be for projects completed by *January 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025*.

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Entry Category:

Education/Workforce Development – A program or project that introduces new employees, demonstrates an effective training mechanism, or otherwise enhances knowledge of our industry.

Events and Fundraising – A program or project that clearly raised significant funds for an industry related cause and/or an event that experienced a dramatic increase in attendance, industry visibility and/or net profitability.

Governmental Affairs – A program or project that effectively communicates the message of governmental activities, or demonstrates success in championing an industry cause.

Member Programs – A program or project that shows performance results through increases in members or retention of members.

Public Relations – A program or project that positively highlights the activities of the association to external audiences.

Communications – A program or project that positively impacts the association's communication to members and stakeholders.

Please respond to the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. Title of Program
2. Goals & Objectives of Program
3. Target Audience
4. Results of Program
5. Evaluation Measures
6. How was the program presented to the Target audience?
7. Additional information

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN May 14, 2025

À la Heart GVL Fundraising Campaign ***An Emergency Assistance Program for Greenville County's Hospitality Employees***

Goals & Objectives: À la Heart GVL understands that a hospitality worker in crisis needs assistance as quickly as possible. Our goal is to remove as many barriers as possible to receiving emergency assistance, while maintaining the integrity of our program and protecting the mission of À la Heart GVL.

Modeled after Spartanburg County's Hubitality, À la Heart GVL provides emergency assistance to hospitality industry employees in Greenville County in times of personal crisis. Greenville County's hospitality industry is quadruple the size of Spartanburg County's, so it was imperative that enough funds were raised before the application officially opened to the public.

Through a rigorous fundraising approach, the Greenville Chapter of the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association, in partnership with VisitGreenvilleSC, established this fund to provide monetary grants up to \$2,500 for individuals experiencing injury, illness, disaster and/or death, in addition to connecting them with local, state and national resources, and providing maternity assistance.

Our primary goal, in addition to raising overall awareness for the program, was to raise \$100,000 prior to April 30 to launch À la Heart GVL on May 6.

Target Audience: Our target audience is any individual working in Greenville County, South Carolina's hospitality and leisure industry, as this industry is one of the county's largest employers, employing more than 52,000 individuals according to recent data.

When a crisis strikes and an employee misses work, À la Heart GVL will be there ensuring that they can still meet their financial obligations. À la Heart GVL is devoted to keeping families united and nourished, assisting in the prevention of eviction and homelessness. In times of desperation, we are here to wrap our arms around those in need, offering not just support, but a lifeline of compassion and care.

While the individual is not required to live in Greenville County, they must be employed in the county.

Campaign Results: The South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Foundation (SCRLF) piloted a similar program, Hubitality, in Spartanburg County and has proven successful in providing more than \$70,000 in emergency assistance to the county's hospitality employees, helping people stay in their homes, provide a proper funeral, keep the heat on in the cold and ensure transportation to maintain employment. Hubitality has been in existence since February 2022.

Through a rigorous fundraising approach, the Greenville Chapter set a goal of raising \$100,000 for À la Heart GVL before officially launching the program's application to the public. Using spheres of influence, we identified and built relationships with committed and prospective donors, leveraged matching contributions, and hosted fundraising events to maximize exposure and awareness of this important project for Greenville County's hospitality industry.

As of May 6, 2025, when À la Heart GVL was officially announced during National Travel and Tourism Week and VisitGreenvilleSC's Hospitality Night, we reached our year one fundraising goal of \$100,000 through generous contributions from Legacy, Founding and Supporting Partners and one-time donors. Looking forward to 2028, we have already secured more than \$223,500 in multi-year commitments and grant funding.

À la Heart GVL's application for emergency assistance will officially open to the public on June 1, 2025.

Evaluation Measures: Modeled after Giving Kitchen, the SCRLF piloted a similar program, Hubitality, in Spartanburg County and has proven successful in providing more than \$70,000 in emergency assistance to the county's hospitality employees over the span of almost four years. Hubitality has been in existence since February 2022 and has raised more than \$300,000 through generous contributions and fundraising events.

Through strategic fundraising efforts, the Greenville Chapter met our goal of raising \$100,000 prior to the emergency assistance application going live to the public on June 1, 2025.

Based on the number of individuals who submitted applications when a similar program launched in Spartanburg, we anticipate a high volume of individuals submitting initial applications in Greenville County.

How was the program presented to the target audience?

As the voice of the hospitality industry, the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association and Foundation are dedicated to the growth and success of the hospitality industry and its economic impact in the state through advocacy, education, and innovation.

À la Heart GVL, an emergency assistance program for Greenville County hospitality employees, was launched by SCRLA's Greenville Chapter and VisitGreenvilleSC. Modeled after the Giving Kitchen and Hubitality, the Greenville Chapter's board of directors adopted Hubitality's mission and vision statements, and standard operating procedures. The SOPs were expanded slightly to include attractions employees, in addition to hotel and restaurant employees.

Needing to differentiate the branding from Hubitality, we secured a nonprofit marketing grant through FUEL, a local advertising agency, to conceptualize and brand À la Heart GVL. Once the style sheets and logos were finalized, our team was able to develop a website (alaheartgvl.org) to market the emergency assistance program to donors, stakeholders and the general public at no cost to the Foundation.

With a board of 12 passionate hospitality professionals and through a partnership with VisitGreenvilleSC, À la Heart GVL will work hard to not only continue the growth of the hospitality industry in South Carolina's Upstate but also take care of its own. Their shared vision of creating an inclusive environment with strong community relations for Greenville County's hospitality workers in critical need is the solid base of their foundation.

As the vision for À la Heart GVL came to life, board members began securing funding from various companies and organizations in Greenville County to reach our \$100,000 fundraising goal. Our goal was reached in time for VisitGreenvilleSC's Hospitality Night, which occurred during National Travel and Tourism Week. More than 250 attendees, including stakeholders and government officials, gathered for the official launch of À la Heart GVL at New Realm Brewing in the heart of downtown Greenville.

Representatives from the SCRLA and VisitGreenvilleSC spoke about the importance of bringing this program to Greenville County and the impact it will have on more than 52,000 hospitality and leisure employees who work within the municipality.

Our goal is to continue partnering with various businesses and organizations to further our mission of removing as many barriers as possible to continue helping hospitality employees in critical need and heightening brand awareness around À la Heart GVL as a whole.

The emergency assistance application will officially launch on June 1, 2025.

Additional Information: Through the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Foundation, À la Heart GVL will provide emergency assistance to hospitality employees working in Greenville County who are facing unforeseen personal crises causing financial hardship. Grants up to \$2,500 may be awarded to qualifying applicants facing financial struggles due to injury, illness, disaster, and/or death; if applicable, an additional \$500 grant may be awarded for maternity assistance or mental health resources. In addition to financial assistance, À la Heart GVL provides a resource hub to connect hospitality workers with appropriate government and community organizations that can provide services for those in need. Resources include employment, financial services, health & wellness, housing, legal, mental health, and substance abuse help at the local, state, and/or federal levels.