

WHO ARE WE?

The CRA is Connecticut's sole trade association representing the interests of our local restaurant and hospitality industries. We are a mission-driven member-based non-profit comprised of community advocates who fight every day to ensure business owners throughout Connecticut not only survive - but thrive.

Our network includes our 2,000+ members, an active and committed Board of Directors, expert government relations, communications, and legal teams, as well as our partners at the National Restaurant Association and CRA leadership and staff. Joining the CRA means being a part of this community and tapping into the resources we employ to advance the interests of our industries.

OUR MEMBERS - More than 2,000 restaurant businesses across CT are members!

Our members are the lifeblood of our association. Not only are we fueled by their passion, dedication, and hard work, but keeping a direct line of communication between the CRA and business owners across the state helps us understand precisely where industry support and advocacy are needed most.

Our members are also our industry's best advocates, and they serve as the front line of our grassroots advocacy. That means when it comes time for our message to be heard, our voice is strong, informed, and united. When elected officials, policy makers and the media hear from the CRA, they know they're hearing from real business owners who live and work in Connecticut, which can make all the difference when legislation impacting our industry is being debated at the State Capitol.

OUR BOARD

Our Board of Directors is made up of dedicated and experienced restaurant owners from across Connecticut who volunteer their time throughout the year in support of our mission. Our Board members are a reflective cross-section of our industry - from single location owners to multi-location restaurant groups, franchisees, caterers and more. The CRA works to ensure that its Board is engaged, active, and representative of the diverse restaurant and hospitality landscape in our state.

OUR NATIONAL PARTNERS

The Connecticut Restaurant Association works closely with our partners at the National Restaurant Association on numerous important advocacy issues throughout the year - issues that impact CT restaurants at both the state and federal level. The National team are a critical resource to the CRA, and we make sure the resources, tools, and information they offer is brought to bear for our members here in Connecticut.



WHO ARE WE?

OUR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & LEGAL TEAMS

In addition to a full team of staff ready to assist you, the CRA also engages with professional services firms that are available year-round to assist the association and its members.

- **Legal Counsel:** The complicated regulatory environment that our industry operates within can lead to questions and concerns of all types. CRA's legal team has extensive knowledge of the changing legal and regulatory landscape impacting our businesses.
- **Government Relations:** Having a voice at the State Capitol, as well as with local elected officials throughout Connecticut, is critical in making sure that our industry is "at the table" where decisions are being made. Our government relations team is monitoring everything going on in government, building relationships with key lawmakers, and shaping policy to improve the landscape for our businesses.
- **Public Relations:** Whether we're communicating with local media, state lawmakers, or the general public (also known as your customers), it's critically important that the voice of our industry is clear, consistent, and loud. That's why we enlist a professional communications firm to make sure our perspective is highlighted consistently in the news media, and that the stories and faces of our local businesses are pushed to the forefront of policy conversations wherever possible.

OUR FOUNDATION

The Connecticut Hospitality Educational Foundation (CHEF) is our 501(c)(3) dedicated to promoting the health and prosperity of Connecticut's hospitality industry. CHEF champions culinary education programs, workforce development initiatives and provides financial support to hospitality employees.

CRA LEADERSHIP & STAFF

The Connecticut Restaurant Association is led by President & CEO Scott Dolch. Scott and the full team of staff at CRA work hard to ensure mission deliverables are met, association objectives are achieved, and that our members feel supported and informed each and every day. That work includes advocacy initiatives, CRA communications, trainings and seminars, membership benefits, networking and industry events, workforce development programs, partnerships, and so much more. The most important job of our staff is serving as a resource to our members 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

YOUR RESTAURANT BUSINESS

With so much at stake, doesn't it make sense to be actively involved with your local trade group, whose work has so much impact on your livelihood and bottom line? Though there are countless ways our work impacts your business, here are just a few to think about:

YOUR BOTTOM LINE

The CRA is at the frontlines of policy and legislation that impact the restaurant industry and small business owners in Connecticut. Whether it's the minimum wage, labor bills, tip credit policy, allergen training, unemployment insurance, outdoor dining, credit card fees, state & local taxes, and so much more. The CRA & our Government Relations team play a critical role in representing the industry wherever policy decisions are being made.

RESOURCES & SUPPORT - save time & money!

The CRA serves as a dedicated resource to our members, including being available 7 days a week, 365 days a year, through our membership hotline. We also have a range of programs available to our members including discounts and savings on products and services you use every day.

Don't go it alone. And don't spin your wheels for months before calling us. We serve as a trusted support network to our members, so that you can focus on running your business.

- Have a question about proposed legislation at the State Capitol
- Need to understand a policy in your town creating challenges for your business
- Need a business or vendor referral
- Have a legal issue, a labor issue, or a question about operational compliance
- Want to voice concerns about cumbersome policy
- Need training or support resources for your staff
- Or just have a simple question!

CONNECTION & COMMUNITY

One of the greatest benefits of membership we so often hear from owners is the network they are able to build through the CRA. Particularly with other restaurateurs from across all parts of the state, and the collaboration, support and mentorship those connections offer. Even for the most experienced operators there comes a sense of belonging, contribution and generosity.

But tapping into our network goes far beyond other restaurant owners. It includes our various partners such as our hospitality law team, our lobbying team, our industry partners and vendor members, our dedicated staff and our many other industry networks.

You are not in a silo. You are part of a community of experienced professionals and dedicated advocates committed to the growth and advancement of the restaurant and hospitality industry.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

ADVOCACY & REPRESENTATION

The CRA is Connecticut's only trade association representing the interests of our local restaurant and hospitality industries. On behalf of our members, we maintain a dedicated & active presence at the state and local level and work to amplify the voices of small business owners across the state.

DISCOUNTS & SAVINGS

Member-exclusive pricing, promotions, & special offers from our industry partners on products and services you use every day! From food safety certification to payroll services, merchant services, legal consults, music licensing, healthcare solutions, technology services, equipment & so much more.

INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Current and consistent industry-related updates, industry webinars & seminars, access to a dedicated network of industry partners, & a dedicated member helpline whenever industry-related questions arise.

TRAINING & CERTIFICATION

Weekly in-person ServSafe food safety certification opportunities with discounts for members, online certifications for safe food & beverage service, sexual harassment prevention, allergen safety, alcohol certification, and more.

NETWORKING & EVENTS

Annual, widely attended signature events throughout the state, as well as smaller, localized, curated meet ups, giving operators the opportunity to meet, learn and build lasting relationships with fellow restaurateurs and industry professionals in a social environment.

SKILLS TRAINING & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Get connected to the future of the hospitality industry through the education & workforce development initiatives supported by our charitable arm, the Connecticut Hospitality Educational Foundation.

BUSINESS REFERRALS & PROMOTION

Advanced brand visibility & business recognition through featured campaigns, sponsorship opportunities, job board postings, community events calendar, and CRA Member directory.

ctrestaurant.org
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Text: (860) 390 9266

CONNECTICUT
Restaurant
ASSOCIATION

WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



There comes a time for many businesses in our industry when they realize that just focusing on their own day-to-day operations is not enough. In order to grow and reach new levels, it's important to be part of a broad-based movement dedicated exclusively to the advancement of our industry.

That's why membership matters.



There are laws, regulations, and legal and economic policies that have heavy influence on your business operations and profitability.

That's why membership matters.



There are hundreds of other restaurateurs across the state with the same exact problems and challenges as you have. And they are working together to support and lift one another.

That's why membership matters.



There is a next generation of restaurateurs & culinary talent who will inherit what we build today

That's why membership matters.



Because having access to a team of professionals who offer information, support & resources right at your fingertips 7 days a week, 365 days a year can give you just the edge you need.

That's why membership matters.



Because power in numbers is how our voice gets heard.

That's why membership matters.

LEARN MORE

With so many resources and benefits available to our members, it's impossible to include everything in one packet! We also know every business has different needs. For that reason, we have compiled some resources to help you learn more about the CRA & the impact membership can have on your business:

SUBMIT AN INQUIRY

Submit this form to request more information in general or on topics specific to you or your business:



WHO WE ARE. WHAT WE DO. WHY IT MATTERS.

In this recent webinar, our Board Chairman and others share more about the difference membership has made for them.



MEMBERSHIP RESOURCE GUIDE

Our Member Resource Guide is your go to resource for industry support and information at your fingertips. As a benefit of membership, we send a physical copy of the guide annually to all active members. Scan the QR code to view the digital version.



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