



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE INSTITUTE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP AND DAVIS WRIGHT TREMAINE
PARTNER TO SUPPORT COVID-19 IMPACTED SMALL BUSINESSES**

The partnership will focus on providing legal and business support to entrepreneurs of color in communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

NEWARK, NJ, October 27, 2020 — The Institute For Entrepreneurial Leadership (IFEL) announced today that Davis Wright Tremaine LLP will join the Small Businesses Need Us initiative as a Corporate Volunteer Partner. The Small Businesses Need Us initiative was launched by IFEL in May 2020 to create a volunteer force of business professionals and experts to help small businesses recover from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ready to render hands-on, capacity-building assistance, the volunteers are matched with businesses based on a needs assessment and organized into cross-functional teams. The ultimate goals are the survival and success of the businesses. Black and Latinx entrepreneurs are especially encouraged to apply. All work is done remotely via phone and video conferencing.

“We are excited to have Davis Wright Tremaine join us in this fight to save small businesses,” says IFEL CEO Jill Johnson. “This partnership will move the mission forward and provide critical resources where they are needed the most. The firm’s expertise in the restaurant industry is much needed to address the challenges facing our small community-based restaurants.”

According to information provided by the National Restaurant Association, a business and advocacy organization representing the interests of more than 380,000 restaurant locations across the country, the restaurant industry expects to suffer a loss of up to 240 billion dollars by the end of 2020. Additionally, 61% of operators surveyed say that existing federal relief is not sufficient enough to prevent workforce reductions. The [Independent Restaurant Coalition](#) noted that 56% of restaurants have at least 50% in new debt as a result of COVID-19.

“The disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on communities of color makes it imperative that firms like ours take action,” said Lynn Loacker, head of Davis Wright Tremaine’s Project W initiative, which supports women entrepreneurs across the country and has a particular focus on women of color. “We are honored to partner with IFEL in bringing our skills, networks, and other resources to bear—particularly our highly experienced restaurant practice team—on behalf of the small businesses that face such unprecedented challenges.”

Davis Wright Tremaine joins existing Small Businesses Need Us Corporate Volunteer Partners including KPMG, Porzio Bromberg & Newman, P.C., Gibbons P.C., SCORE NJ, and Ellevote. To learn more, visit SmallBusinessesNeedUs.org #SBNU. Business owners are encouraged to apply to get help at www.weareifel.org/recoveryassistance.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP

Founded in 2002, the [Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership](https://www.weareifel.org) (IFEL) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that supports economic development through entrepreneurship. We are experts in creating and implementing small business programming in support of larger economic development objectives. Our mission is to eradicate the systemic barriers that prevent entrepreneurs of color from being able to access the knowledge, networks, and capital required for business success. Visit us at <https://www.weareifel.org>

ABOUT DAVIS WRIGHT TREMAINE LLP

Davis Wright Tremaine LLP is an AmLaw 100 law firm with eight offices around the United States. The firm is regularly recognized as an industry leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion. For more information, visit diversity.dwt.com.

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