



## Rob Gifford

Executive Vice President

National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation

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Rob Gifford is Executive Vice President of the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF). As the philanthropic foundation of the National Restaurant Association, the NRAEF is dedicated to enhancing the industry's training and education, career opportunity and community engagement efforts. The Foundation and its portfolio of programs work to Attract, Empower and Advance today's and tomorrow's restaurant and foodservice industry workforce. Under Gifford's leadership, the Foundation has expanded its portfolio of programs to better serve the nation's restaurant workforce and support career opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people, and its work has won accolades including a Power of "A" Gold Award from the *American Society of Association Executives* for its mission to "Create a Competitive Workforce."

Recent initiatives include launching the first-ever restaurant manager apprenticeship program for the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and creating Restaurant Ready, a partnership with community-based organizations nationwide dedicated to teaching job and life skills to underserved populations. Other programs spearheaded by the Foundation include:

- **ProStart** – a two-year pre-apprenticeship program offered at 1,800 high schools teaching 140,000 students essential skills in culinary arts and restaurant management
- **Military** – a training and recognition program helping military servicemen and women across all branches transition their skills to restaurant and foodservice jobs and careers
- **Scholarships and Grants** – awarding annual financial assistance to people from all backgrounds pursuing education and technical training

Gifford's career spans more than 25 years of advocacy and public policy experience. Before joining the National Restaurant Association and the NRAEF, Gifford served as the President and CEO of the Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA). During his tenure, MRA was voted one of the five most effective association lobbying organizations in Michigan, and Gifford was presented with the MRA's Vision and Leadership Award. Gifford began his career working in the United States Senate, where he served for seven years on the staff of Senator Robert W. Kasten (R-Wi).

A graduate of the University of Maryland, Gifford has served as Chairman of the International Society of Restaurant Association Executives (ISRAE), as an officer on the Council of State Restaurant Associations (CSRA), and on the Boards of the National Restaurant Association, National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, Michigan Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan Society of Association Executives.