

JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION AWARDS

After a Previous Year of Domination, Philly Only Has One James Beard Award Finalist for 2024

In better news, we have two leadership award honorees by [Ernest Owens](#) Apr 3, 2024, 11:18am EDT

Only one contender from Philly has made the cut as a finalist, or nominee, for the 2024 James Beard Awards, considered one of the highest honors in the food world. The James Beard Foundation announced these finalists this morning in Washington, D.C. and will announce winners at a gala in Chicago on June 10.

Philly's sole finalist is competing in the category of outstanding chef, Mid-Atlantic: Jesse Ito of Japanese hot spot [Royal Sushi & Izakaya](#).

This is a major sea change for Philly compared to last year's James Beard Awards — which included the [three winners out of six finalists](#) in 2023.

Today's "short list" of finalists has been whittled from a "long list" of semifinalists, announced in January, [that included 10 contenders from around Philly](#). That said, even making it to the semifinals is considered an honor in the restaurant industry.

Today's announcement also included the winners of the foundation's Leadership, Humanitarian of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement awards. Muhammad Abdul-Hadi of [North](#)



Patrick McMullan/Getty

[Philly's Down North Pizza](#) and Down North Pizza Foundation and Christa Barfield of [FarmerJawn](#) were two Philly winners out of the five Leadership award honorees.

[Vietnam Restaurant](#), longtime Chinatown/University City gem currently owned by Benny Lai, was one of six winners in the America's Classics category.

Some Vox Media staff members are part of the voting body for the James Beard Awards. Eater is partnering with the James Beard Foundation to livestream the awards in 2024. All editorial content is produced independently of the James Beard Foundation.

[Ernest Owens](#) is the Editor of Eater Philly, and the food expert to go to when you're out of options.