



American Culinary Federation Chef of the Year 2027 Regional Qualifier Application

Updated: August 12, 2026

Application Deadline: December 31, 2026

Regional Qualifier Competitions:

- Western Region
February 26-27
Orange Coast College
2701 Fairview Rd
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
- Northeast Region
March 12-13
Columbus State Community
550 E Spring St
Columbus, OH 43215
- Central Region
March 19-20
Johnson County Community College
12345 College Blvd
Overland Park, KS 66210
- Southeast Region
April 2-3
Virginia Western Community College
3098 Colonial Ave SW, Weber Hall, Room 305
Roanoke, VA 24015

ACF National Convention: Orlando, FL – July 12-15, 2027

Overview:

The Student Chef of the Year award recognizes an outstanding student culinarian that has demonstrated the highest standard of culinary skills and professionalism at this stage of their career.

Application Fee: \$100 (due with application, non-refundable)

NOTE: All qualifier and national competitors must be ACF members

Email your completed application to competitions@acfchefs.org



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Eligibility:

- Candidates should have extremely high standards.
- Student Associate ACF members in good standing thirty (30) days prior to the regional championships
- Can be a local chapter member or national member at the student associate membership level.
- Cannot have competed as a professional in any ACF or WACS competitions prior to or during the period leading up to the national championships should they move past regionals.
- Cannot hold ACF certifications above the CFC, CC, CFPC, or CPC levels.
- The student's region will be determined at the time of their application. If selected to compete, candidates must compete within their designated region, even if they relocate during the competition season for work or other reasons.

NOTE: Past national competitors may reapply at any time. Past National winners cannot reapply.

Please submit all required materials:

- A completed application
- A current professional resume
- High resolution, digital, color photograph of candidate in a white chef coat
- Two (2) letters of recommendation

Selection Process:

- Regional winners are chosen by competing at the qualifier that is scheduled for their *specific region*. Your specific region is determined by your home address and the region in which it falls on the ACF regions map (Welcome to ACF - How to Register as a Member (acfchefs.org))
- The highest numerical score from each region will advance to the ACF National Competition.
- Applicants can only compete at their designated regional qualifier.
- The four (4) regional winners will move on to compete at the ACF National Convention. The addition of a military representative as the fifth (5) competitor will be decided at the military qualifier.
- The national winner will be determined based on the highest cumulative scores at the ACF National Competition regardless of the medal outcome.
- A minimum score of 70.0 is required to advance from the qualifier to the national competition. Any score below 70.0 will require a review by the Culinary Competition Committee.
- All the regional winners will be acknowledged at the ACF National Convention.

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Winner Notification:

- The regional winners will be announced at their respective qualifiers and will have ten (10) days to accept the invitation to compete at the ACF National Competitions. If any of the top four (4) decline the invitation, the next highest-scoring competitor will be offered an invitation to advance.

Attendance and Critique Requirements:

- Student Competitors and coaches are required to attend the judges and competitors meeting at both the qualifier and ACF National Competitions in order to take part in the competition. This meeting usually takes place the day before the competitions begin. This meeting is vital because it is where any last-minute changes or kitchen issues are addressed. It is also where competitors pick their starting time and identify their corresponding stations within the kitchen.
- All the competitors in the qualifier competitions are required to attend the critiques with the judges to be eligible to advance to the ACF National Competition. This is an opportunity for the competitors to receive feedback to help improve and become more competitive should they advance to the national level.
- All national competitors will be required to attend the President's Gala to take part in the awards ceremony.
- If a competitor is unable to attend any of the required meetings or events, they must notify the Culinary Competition Chair as soon as possible. The Culinary Competition Chair will review the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and decide accordingly on how to proceed. All decisions in these matters are final.
- Coaches must be present for critiques.

National Winner:

The SCOY and SPCOY will serve as the American Culinary Federation Young Chefs Ambassadors. The role commences in August of the same year. This is a one (1) year volunteer commitment that will work with the ACF National Office to encourage Young Chef involvement in the ACF. This may include hosting a webinar, performing a demonstration or writing articles.

If you are not interested in taking on this role, a replacement will be selected by the ACF National President in collaboration with the Executive Director.

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Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

ACF Member Number: _____ GPA: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Chapter Name: _____ Chapter ID: _____

*Coaches Name: _____ *Email: _____

School Name: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Payment:

Card #: _____ CVC: _____ Exp: _____

Name on Card: _____

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I hereby certify that the information I have provided is correct and I understand the selection process and attendance requirements for this competition. Furthermore, I grant permission to the ACF and its subsidiaries to use this information for promotion purposes which may include printed or electronic material, videos, and photography. I understand that I will not be compensated and may not be notified before use. All decisions made by the ACF National President are final and not subject to appeal.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

*Coach's Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Coach's Printed Name: _____

*Required

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