



AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION
STRATEGIC PLAN

JULY 2023-JULY 2026



American Culinary Federation
The Standard of Excellence for Chefs



**"IT'S NOT ABOUT
PERFECTION; IT'S
ABOUT THE JOY OF
STRIVING."**

- THOMAS KELLER

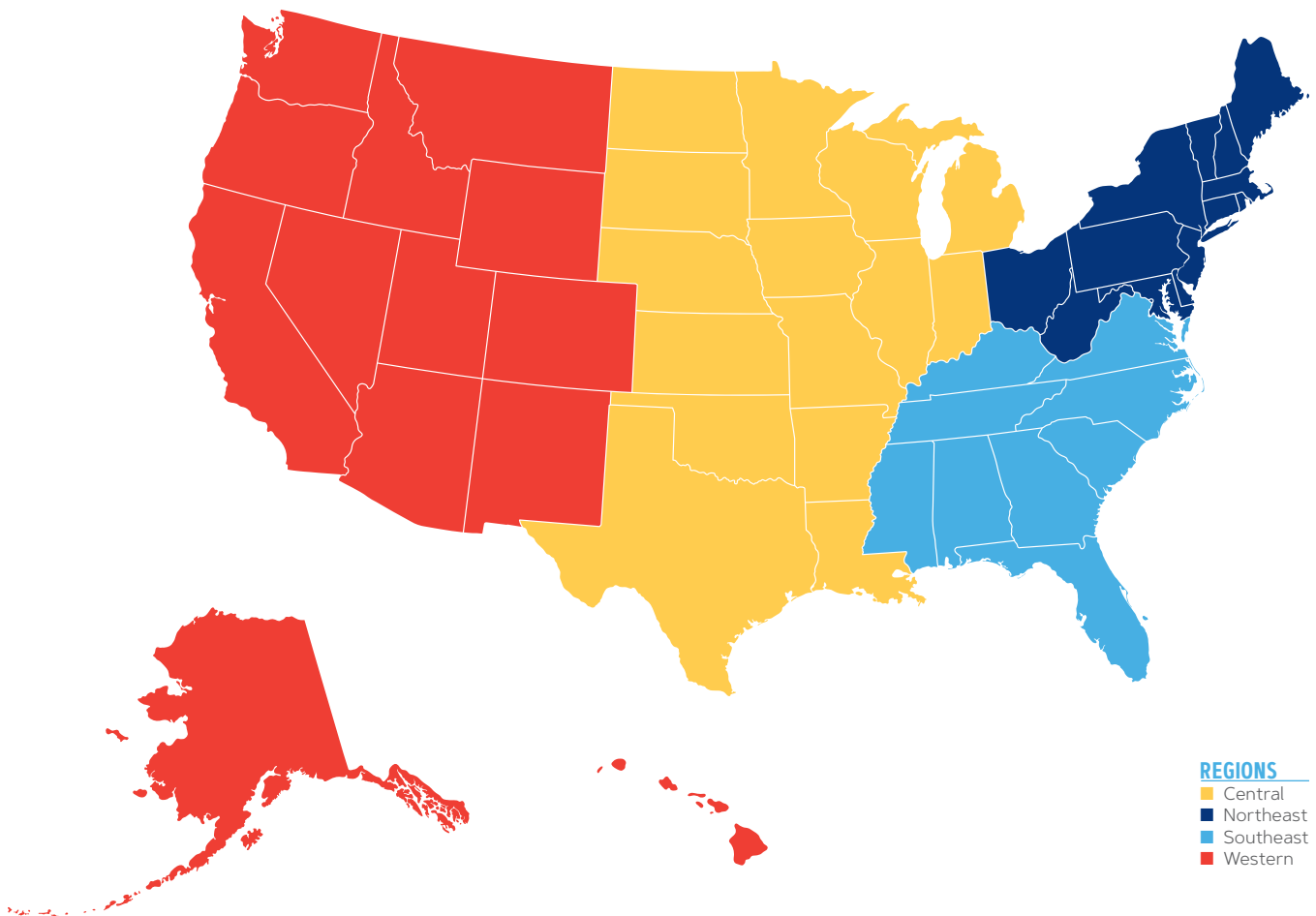
ABOUT THE AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION

Our History

The American Culinary Federation, Inc. (ACF), a professional organization for chefs and cooks, was founded in **1929** in New York City by three chefs' organizations: the Société Culinaire Philanthropique, the Vatel Club and the Chefs de Cuisine Association of America. Since our inception, little has changed in our principal goals. We are an organization based on promoting the professional image of American chefs worldwide through education of culinarians at all levels. In **1976**, ACF forever changed the culinary industry by elevating the position of the executive chef from service status to the professional category in the U.S. Department of Labor's Dictionary of Official Titles. Since this change, the culinary industry and our organization have grown tremendously.

1929

1976



REGIONS
■ Central
■ Northeast
■ Southeast
■ Western

Our Present

ACF is now the largest professional chefs' organization in North America. We are made up of more than 12,000 members that belong to more than 150 chapters in four regions across the U.S. Today, ACF is the leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship, competitions and programmatic accreditation designed to enhance professional growth for all current and future chefs and pastry chefs. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive culinary certification program in the world. ACF is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international competitions.

2023 |
| 2026

Our Future

This Strategic Plan reflects the priorities of the ACF for the next three years, emphasizing the quality and variety of services and resources we provide for our members. It is designed to be the roadmap for the staff and current and future boards to assure relevance, growth, and success for our members.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This strategic plan builds on the previous 2018-2023 Strategic Plan and is the combined effort of the ACF Board of Directors and the Senior Staff.

A strategic plan is a comprehensive document that outlines an organization's long-term goals and objectives and defines the strategies and actions required to achieve them. It serves as a roadmap for the organization, providing direction and guidance for decision-making and resource allocation.

A strategic plan is crucial for organizations as it provides a blueprint for success, aligns stakeholders, guides decision-making, and enables effective resource allocation. It helps organizations navigate challenges, adapt to change, and achieve their long-term objectives in a focused and coordinated manner.

MISSION & VALUES

Through this Strategic Planning process, the existing Mission and Values of the ACF were reviewed during the 2018-2023 planning period to ensure the purpose of the organization and its guiding principles were conveyed. No changes were made for this plan.

Our mission statement reflects this work and is as follows:

Mission: We are the standard of excellence for the culinary industry, advancing and promoting professionalism, leadership and collaboration.

While our mission statement reflects our role in the culinary community, our values stand as the foundation of the work that we do.

Here are our guiding principles:

Professionalism

Within our association and our workplaces, we promote the highest standards of professionalism, through certification, integrity, respect for diversity and transparency.

Leadership

Within our association and our workplaces, we shape and adapt to changes in our industry, reward creativity and continuous improvement, and promote leadership development and lifelong learning.

Collaboration

Within our association and our workplaces, we respect our colleagues: building productive relationships, networking, serving customers, empowering employees and collaborating productively with constituents and partners.

Excellence

Within our association and our workplaces, we uphold the highest standards of quality in all products and services, setting high goals and taking pride in hard work, persistence, and success.



ADDRESSING THE NATURE OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The planning team recognized that the industry will continue to be impacted by the same factors in 2023-2026, as we faced in the past five years:

- Competition and Compensation in Culinary Industry
- Availability of Trained Personnel
- Issues of Diversity and Inclusion
- Public Awareness of Professionalism in Culinary Profession
- Changing Demographics of Young and Student Culinarians
- Impact of Technology on Learning and Communicating

How ACF will respond to these industry drivers in 2023-2026 will determine our success in achieving our mission moving forward.

STRATEGIC & TACTICAL PRIORITIES

The following strategic goals and tactical priorities are the strategic framework for the ACF moving forward. Each strategic goal will be supported by the tactical framework shown below:

I. To enhance ACF awareness among and communicate value to key target audiences such as professionals, employers and public stakeholders.

- Develop a Strategic Marketing Plan, identifying key audience(s) and message(s)
- Target key audiences with specific messages across all communication publications/ platforms to increase engagement and compel conversion
- Revamp and better publicize awards programs to improve participation of applicants and voting among membership
- Increase awareness and recognition of achievement for accreditation, certification and apprenticeships, in order to drive value among involved members and target audiences
- Become the premier third-party approver for all external culinary-related programs, to include events, curriculum, and postsecondary and nontraditional institutions.



II. To provide high quality professional education programs and services that add value for our members, prospective members, employers and the profession.

- Leverage and expand ACF's role as the premier organization for culinary certification
- Overhaul internal processes to streamline planning initiatives
- Continuously strive to increase relevance and grow presence in industry through event opportunities, to include the MasterCraft Summit Series and National Convention
 - Solicit topics of interest, especially those related to member success
 - Expand networking activities at all events and conferences
 - Assess location, duration, frequency, and content.
- Expand and promote apprenticeship programs.
- Offer quality professional development and training opportunities through the Online Learning Center and Apprenticeship Portal to enhance and validate culinary skills for career placement and job growth through certification.

III. To grow and engage our membership, continually assuring relevance in programs, presence and services

- Continuously evaluate the connectivity and relevance of ACF Products and services across the culinary life cycle of ACF members
- Bolster recruitment and retention of professional culinarians and emerging culinarians
 - Recruit professional members at national and chapter levels, through social medial channels, webinars, events. etc.
 - o Grow Property Membership program with specific target markets (i.e., non-commercial segments)
 - Target emerging culinarians through our ACFEF accredited programs
 - o Create Task Force of Brand Ambassadors including secondary and post-secondary education and members in various markets to recruit at local and regional levels.
- Provide resources, tools and support for national and local chapters including leadership outreach, chapter -specific programming and future leaders' pipeline.
- In collaboration with Marketing team, conduct member survey every three to five years, collecting and analyzing demographic data, such as region, age, type of culinarian, etc.
 - Evaluate the overall member experience, including factoring the results from membership survey
 - Seek continuous improvements that positively impact the member experience.



IV. To modernize our technological resources, emphasizing convenience for members and efficiency for the association

- Identify resource needs for best efficiencies for implementation of technology tools to fully utilize new technologies
- Leverage IMIS (internal platform) capabilities for an easier path of conversion, create a positive member experience and enable organizational sufficiency





- Continually review and improve website and year-round APP for ease of use, accessibility and content.

V. To build a strong Board-Staff partnership in the leadership and management of the association, assuring performance, continuity, and transparency

- Adopt and focus on Strategic Plan, focusing on and monitoring quarterly progress on agreed upon priorities, deviating only as necessary to remain relevant, viable and responsive
- Examine governance structure of ACF/ACFEF with a goal to create options to improve overall governance matters and chapter relationships within ACF
- Empower the staff to have a greater voice in providing solutions to the future success of the organization.
- Structure a pathway to develop future leaders.

VI. To assure the ongoing financial viability of the association

- Rationalize and assure all programs and services and assess return on investment, including cost-justification for new initiatives.
- Identify innovative approaches to generating revenue in all activities, looking for/ experimenting with additional fee-for-service opportunities
- Explore merger opportunities with like organizations





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