American Culinary Federation

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American Culinary Federation Appoints JJ Vitale as Executive Director

JACKSONVILLE, FL – April, 6, 2026 – The American Culinary Federation (ACF) today announced the appointment of JJ Vitale as Executive Director, effective April 3, 2026, following her tenure as Acting Executive Director since December 2025.

Vitale joined the ACF in September 2024 as Director of Communication Strategy, where she played a key role in strengthening the organization's voice, visibility and member engagement. Her rapid progression reflects both her leadership capabilities and a clear commitment to the ACF's mission.

During her time as Acting Executive Director, Vitale has provided steady leadership and continuity, guiding the ACF through a period of growth and transition while advancing its focus on professional excellence across the culinary industry.

Vitale brings a dynamic background in nonprofit leadership, communications strategy and membership engagement. Prior to joining the ACF, she served as Director of Communications at the National Association for Proton Therapy, where she led integrated communications initiatives, strengthened stakeholder engagement, and elevated organizational visibility.

Earlier in her career, Vitale played a key role in membership growth and experience strategy at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, building a strong foundation in audience development and community connection. Combined with her roots in hospitality, her experience reflects a deep understanding of how to engage, grow and serve diverse professional communities.

Since joining the ACF, Vitale has led several key initiatives, including the rebranding and launch of the Chef's Table member engagement platform, the expansion of the ACF's thought leadership through enhanced Trend Reports and the revitalization of the National Culinary Review. She has also driven a more strategic approach to communications and successfully led a national convention, with planning underway for her second event in Grand Rapids.

As Executive Director, Vitale will focus on strengthening ACF's core programs, including apprenticeship and accreditation, expanding strategic partnerships and supporting the ACF Culinary Team USA as it prepares for international competitions.

"It's an honor to lead an organization with such a rich legacy and important mission," said Vitale. "I'm proud to serve the American Culinary Federation and its members, and I'm committed to building on that foundation to strengthen and grow our impact across the industry."

ACF President Rene J. Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC, added, “It’s important that we continue to grow our organization and promote from within. As we prepare for our national convention, it’s a good moment to reflect on the work JJ has already done. She brings energy, focus and a clear commitment to our members, and I’m excited about what her leadership will bring moving forward.”

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About the American Culinary Federation

The American Culinary Federation, Inc. (ACF), established in 1929, is the standard of excellence for chefs in North America. With more than 12,000 members spanning more than 150 chapters nationwide, ACF is the leading culinary association offering educational resources, certification, apprenticeship, and programmatic accreditation. The American Culinary Federation Education Foundation is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions, and to Chef & Child, founded in 1989 to promote proper nutrition in children and to combat childhood obesity. For more information, visit www.achchefs.org.

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