

American Culinary Federation

# CERTIFICATION

A Mark of Accomplishment

By Alina Cooper, Certification Manager



Certified Executive Pastry Chef® (CEPC®) practical exam candidate Lorraine Howard, of Omaha, Neb., finishes composing the cold plated dessert portion of the practical exam in July.

**How can a chef stand out from the competition in this fast-paced and competitive restaurant and foodservice industry?** Industry certification can set you apart in a competitive marketplace. Cooks, chefs, employers and even consumers are taking additional steps to ensure they are hiring or working with the most skilled and knowledgeable chefs in the industry. It is through such professional certification programs as the American Culinary Federation's (ACF) that culinarians can demonstrate their skills, knowledge and professionalism to the foodservice industry.

ACF began certifying chefs in 1977 and currently has nearly 10,000 certified chefs. Many industry certifications are only offered to those who have mastered a particular skill or reached the top of their field. ACF, however, offers 14 different levels of certification, which are tiered to offer a professional certification at each step of one's career. As you increase your culinary experience, you'll discover a certification level that can objectively measure your increased knowledge and skill—one that will elevate you professionally.

Today's chefs and cooks must continually stay on top of food trends, nutrition standards, food safety, sanitation, food costs and supervision and management techniques. It is through certification that chefs can demonstrate to their employers, peers and guests that they are committed to making professional strides to better themselves and, in turn, offer more value to their organizations.

## What are the requirements?

Although backgrounds may be diverse, the certification parameters allow the self-taught chef who grew up in the kitchen the same opportunity for certification as the chef who received a traditional culinary school education. There are four basic requirements for ACF certification, which vary based on the level of certification you are seeking.

1. Document educational background.
2. Document appropriate work experience.
3. Pass a 100-question written exam confirming your culinary knowledge.
4. Pass a hands-on practical exam that demonstrates your culinary skills.

## How long is certification valid?

ACF certifications are valid for five years, during which time chefs can earn continuing-education hours (CEH) by attending professional development programs such as conferences, trade shows and educational courses. Professional development programs count toward recertification and help chefs stay current and competitive.

## Certification — what's in it for me?

- Show personal pride and increased confidence in job performance.
- Show potential employers professional credibility.
- Validate basic culinary skills and standards.
- Demonstrate culinary excellence and professionalism.
- Differentiate from the competition.
- Add credibility to your experience.
- Give the public confidence that you have the skills, knowledge and training to prepare nutritious food in a safe and sanitary environment.
- Enhance your career opportunities by standing above your competition.

The restaurant and foodservice industry is calling for qualified chefs and cooks. Distinguish yourself from the rest by becoming industry certified. Certification is an investment in your career and your future. Start your way to the top today.

For more information, contact the American Culinary Federation's Certification Department at (800) 624-9458, or visit [www.acfcchefs.org](http://www.acfcchefs.org).



# WHY CERTIFY?



## 93%

of ACF certified members report that **certification is important** to their culinary career

(2009 ACF Certification Survey)

## Certified

executive chefs on average earn **\$10,000 more** a year than executive chefs not certified

(Readex Research Survey)

## 97%

of ACF certified members would **recommend ACF certification** to their staff, peers or culinary students

(2009 ACF Certification Survey)

Enhance your Career Opportunities

Differentiate

Excel

ACF certification helps build a successful culinary career. Differentiate your skills and add credibility to your experience. Guide your career and add value to organizations with ACF certification.

**Certify Today.**

Contact ACF at [certify@acfchefs.net](mailto:certify@acfchefs.net).

[www.acfchefs.org](http://www.acfchefs.org) - 1-800-624-9458