AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION

Certified Fundamental Cook (CFC) Credential Information

2025 National Leadership Conference

Description:

American Culinary Federation (ACF) certification is the only culinary program with stackable credentials and is recognized throughout the industry and by the Department of Labor. ACF certifications validate knowledge, skills, and experience in industry-relevant competencies and are earned based on education, experience, and successful completion of both a written and practical exam. The ACF Certified Fundamental Cook and Certified Fundamental Pastry Cook credentials are the first steps on a ladder of certifications and do not require any work experience.

Eligibility Requirements:

- High school diploma/GED

OR

- Enrolled in a culinary course(s) covering a minimum of 75 hours in basic food prep, safety and sanitation, culinary nutrition, and foodservice management.

Exam Information:

Candidates will complete the ACF Certificate of Culinary Essentials exam as the exam requirement for this credential. The ACF Certificate of Culinary Essentials exam covers safety and sanitation, culinary nutrition, and fundamental concepts of the culinary arts and foodservice industry concepts.

The exam consists of 100 questions, with approximately 50 questions on culinary fundamentals, 35 questions on food safety and sanitation, 15 questions on foodservice concepts, and 15 questions on culinary nutrition, to be completed within 120 minutes. The exam is completed on the ACF Online Learning Center and proctored by a locally-identified administrator. Proctor to candidate ratio is 1:30.

Applicant must pass the exam with 75 percent to earn the Certificate of Culinary Essentials and satisfy the exam requirement for the ACF Certified Fundamental Cook credential.

Performance Assessment Information:

Candidates will demonstrate their culinary skills in the performance assessment and must prepare a main course of sautéed chicken with fine herb sauce, rice pilaf, and steamed carrots within 2 hours and 30 minutes. Substitute ingredients may be used as long as the candidate demonstrates the required skills competencies.

Candidates will be evaluated by a culinary professional (preferably ACF-certified) identified by the host location with a minimum of three years of industry experience within the last five years. The evaluator to candidate ratio is 1:3.

Price:

The price to take the Certified Fundamental Cook (CFC) examination as part of the 2025 National Leadership Conference is $35 per individual. This price includes certification and exam processing fees, as well as access to one practice written exam on the ACF Online Learning Center.

Exam Proctor Requirements:

Proctor must be a "disinterested third party" with no direct family or direct educator relationship to the applicant. Duties:

- Confirm the applicant's identity by using a photo identification such as a driver's license.
- Ensure the applicant does not receive any outside assistance while taking the exam. This includes course materials, help from other persons, prepared notes, and access to other websites. Cell phones must be checked and turned completely off. The student may use a non-programmable calculator.
- Remain in the presence of the applicant from the time the applicant starts the exam to the time the applicant finishes, or until the end of the maximum time allowed for the exam, whichever comes first.

Performance Facility Requirements

The facility will provide ample space for the candidate to successfully complete the performance assessment to include refrigeration, work area, sinks, ranges, and oven space. Each station must be provided with a basic set of cutting boards, pots, pans, and hand tools. Credential candidates are required to bring their own ingredients; however, a facility may choose to provide ingredients. The facility administrator will provide the candidates with a list of available equipment and food.

Next Steps:

Purchase the ACF Exam ($35) when registering for the 2025 National Leadership Conference.