

Professional Organizations

MEMBERSHIP in an organization may help you find a job, and it usually enables you to meet other people with the same interests. Most organizations have annual events. Some have competitions. Others offer scholarships and financial aid to students entering the field. So the membership dues typically pay off.



Objective:



Describe various professional organizations.

Key Terms:



American Culinary Federation (ACF)
American Dietetic Association (ADA)
National Restaurant Association (NRA)

Becoming Familiar with Professional Organizations

Professional organizations typically enable students and professionals to network. Resources are offered for members and may include access to professional journals, podcasts, job postings, and more. The annual membership fee may be worth the expense for students because of the scholarship, grant, and apprenticeship opportunities. Three of the most popular organizations in the food service industry are discussed.

AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION

The **American Culinary Federation (ACF)** is the largest professional chefs' organization in North America. It was established in 1929. Membership exceeds 21,000. With membership,



FIGURE 1. Membership in the American Culinary Federation can enable you to participate in competitions.

résumés can be posted. In addition, members can compete in local, regional, and/or national ACF-sanctioned competitions. Certification information is available. Also, members can access scholarship and apprenticeship information. Members have online access to *The National Culinary Review* and other digital publications as well as access to other professionals in the industry for networking purposes. In the United States, ACF is known as the authority on cooking.

AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

The **American Dietetic Association (ADA)** is an organization that uses the knowledge of registered dietitians to educate people regarding nutrition, healthy weight loss, food safety, and disease management and prevention. Members have access to job postings. They can also obtain information about financial aid and scholarships. In addition, evidence-based practice and policy initiative information is accessible to members. Information resources, educational opportunities, and various discounts are also offered to members. ADA is the world's leading organization of food and health professionals. It is well respected in the culinary and healthcare industries.

NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

The **National Restaurant Association (NRA)** is an organization that strives to help “build customer loyalty, find financial success, and provide rewarding careers in food service.” The NRA represents more than 380,000 businesses in the industry. It has been the nation's leading restaurant industry association since 1919, according to its website.

The NRA has members-only webinars. Members can read about advocacy and representation as well as other current events in the industry. Members have access to articles on sustainability and social responsibility. In addition, research on state-by-state industry facts and

national forecasting is available at no cost to members. Savings calculators and other business tools are also available for members.

MISCELLANEOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Within the food service industry, there are many subcategories. Most of these groups have one or more professional organizations associated with their particular needs. Following are some (*not all*) of those subcategories.

Caterers

- ◆ National Caterers Association
- ◆ National Association of Catering Executives



FIGURE 2. Caterers may belong to the National Caterers Association.

Chain Restaurants

- ◆ National Council of Chain Restaurants

Chefs

- ◆ Chefs Collaborative (encourages sustainable practices)
- ◆ U.S. Personal Chefs Association
- ◆ International Association of Culinary Professionals



FIGURE 3. The Chefs Collaborative is an organization that promotes sustainable practices, such as purchasing food from farmers' markets.

Educators and Trainers

- ◆ Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers
- ◆ Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Motel Association
- ◆ Hospitality Business Alliance

Healthcare

- ◆ National Society for Healthcare Foodservice Management
- ◆ American Society for Healthcare Foodservice Administrators

Manufacturers, Suppliers, and Distributors

- ◆ American Frozen Food Institute
- ◆ Commercial Food Equipment Service Association
- ◆ International Foodservice Distributors Association
- ◆ International Foodservice Manufacturers Association
- ◆ Specialty Foods Distributors and Manufacturers Association



FIGURE 4. In the healthcare industry, employees may join the American Society for Healthcare Foodservice Administrators.

COLLEGE ORGANIZATIONS

Community colleges, vocational institutions, and private colleges offer various opportunities in terms of participation in professional organizations. Depending on the institution, some of the following organizations may be on campus:

- ◆ SkillsUSA
- ◆ Local chamber of commerce
- ◆ Local chapter of ACF
- ◆ National Association of Catering Executives
- ◆ Escoffier Club
- ◆ Sustainable Choices

Summary:



The American Culinary Federation (ACF) is the largest professional chefs' organization in North America. The American Dietetic Association (ADA) is an organization that uses the knowledge of registered dietitians to educate people regarding nutrition, healthy weight loss, food safety, and disease management and prevention. The National Restaurant Association (NRA) is an organization that strives to help “build customer loyalty, find financial success, and provide rewarding careers in food service.”

Caterers, chain restaurants, chefs, educators and trainers, healthcare workers, manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors are some of the subcategories in the industry that have organizations based just on their particular needs.

Community colleges, vocational institutions, and private colleges offer various opportunities in terms of participation in professional organizations. Depending on the institution, some of the following may be on campus: SkillsUSA, local chamber of commerce, local chapter of ACF, National Association of Catering Executives, the Escoffier Club, and Sustainable Choices.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What are two advantages of joining a professional organization?
2. What is the largest professional chefs' organization in North America?
3. What are the three most popular organizations in the food service industry?
4. Name two organizations that manufacturers, suppliers, or distributors may join.
5. What are two organizations with which students may become involved?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Contact a local culinary school or culinary arts instructor at a community college. Ask about organizations for students. Ask if you can attend a meeting of one of the organizations to gain a better idea of how membership helps students. If you cannot attend or nothing is close to where you live, you may ask the instructor to give your name and contact information to several students so you can interview them via e-mail or on the phone about their experiences in professional organizations.

Web Links:



American Culinary Federation

<http://www.acfchefs.org/>

American Dietetic Association

<http://www.eatright.org/>

National Restaurant Association

<http://www.restaurant.org/>

Professional Food Organizations

<http://www.sallybernstein.com/food/chefs-corner/organizations.htm>

Cooking School Resources

<http://www.cookingschools.com/resources>

Professional and Career Resources

http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=4&tax_subject=270&topic_id=1337&level3_id=6740&level4_id=11109