

TRAINING CHAMPIONS, SERVING THE FUTURE: PROSTART



The ProStart program is a two-year, industry-backed culinary arts and restaurant management program for high school students. **Over the past 25+ years, more than 1 million students have participated in ProStart.**

ProStart is taught with a two-level curriculum that:

- Teaches practical skills
- Introduces students to the restaurant and foodservice industry
- Exposes students to innovative career opportunities
- Provides tools and skills needed to become an industry leader

ProStart students complete the program ready to enter the workforce and make an immediate impact in restaurants and foodservice. Participants gain real-world experience through guest speakers, mentorship, facility tours, and competitions. Hands-on work under mentor guidance helps students connect their current performance with future career success.

- Students participate in a two-year curriculum, that combines classroom learning with opportunities to perfect their skills through hands-on experiences in the industry.
- ProStart graduates are eligible to receive the National ProStart Certificate of Achievement (COA), a post-secondary and industry-recognized certificate that can result in scholarships and credits towards apprenticeship, academic and work experience. Graduates are also eligible to receive the Certified Restaurant Professional certification, a stackable industry-recognized credential designed by experts in the restaurant industry.

Key Stats:

222.5K ProStart students in high school programs

2,200+ schools that participate in ProStart

52 US States and Territories with ProStart programs



“While I gained knowledge and crucial skills, *ProStart* truly empowered me with excitement for the career options in the foodservice industry, laying the groundwork for where I am now.”

- Jordan, *ProStart* Alum

“Competing in *ProStart* taught me the importance of working in team settings, supporting my teammates, and helping them succeed”

- Evelyn, *ProStart* Alum



WHERE DO YOU FIT IN? EVERYONE HAS A PLACE IN THE PROSTART PROGRAM

COORDINATORS

ProStart State Coordinators serve as the program representative in their state and utilize NRAEF resources to help support their ProStart programs.

EDUCATORS

High-school educators can establish ProStart in their schools, and help inspire their students to master the ProStart competencies.

STUDENTS

ProStart students gain practical skills and a network of industry connections in addition to access to credentials and scholarship opportunities.

INDUSTRY

Be a key player in the future of this industry, where you can inspire young people to explore career pathways.

NATIONAL PROSTART INVITATIONAL (NPSI)

NPSI is the country's premier secondary school competition focused on restaurant management and culinary arts. Annually, more than 400 student competitors put their skills to the test in front of industry leaders, NRAEF Trustees, state restaurant associations, and family and friends – all with hopes of earning coveted scholarships from the nation's best post-secondary hospitality programs.

HOW THE COMPETITION WORKS: The National ProStart Invitational is composed of two distinct competitions – management and culinary.

MANAGEMENT

Management teams develop a proposal for the next promising restaurant concept and present it to a panel of industry judges. Their problem-solving skills are tested as they quickly solve challenges faced by managers daily.

CULINARY

The culinary competition highlights each team's creative abilities through the preparation of a three-course meal in 60 minutes, using only two butane burners, and without access to running water or electricity. Students are evaluated on taste, skill, teamwork, safety, and sanitation.

WHAT'S AT STAKE? WHAT DO YOU WIN?

The top five teams from the culinary and management competitions are awarded generous educational scholarships to help further their careers in the restaurant and foodservice industry. In 2025, \$200,000 in scholarships were awarded to winning students.

READY TO MAKE YOUR MARK?

GET INVOLVED:

To learn more about ProStart, visit ChooseRestaurants.org/ProStart or email ProStart@nraef.org.

NPSI SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Elevate your brand, mission, and goals to an audience of industry leaders and the next generation of top restaurant talent. Email us: partnerships@nraef.org.

If you are an educator, mentor, chaperone, parent, or school administrator, please contact your ProStart State Coordinator with questions. Learn more by visiting: <https://chooseresaurants.org/prostart/coordinator>.

