

# Smithfield Foods Honored for Workforce Development Through Apprenticeship Programs

SMITHFIELD, Va., April 24, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Smithfield Foods received two workforce development awards from the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) for its apprenticeship programs dedicated to developing and training the next-generation workforce.

"Providing valuable professional development experiences is key to opening doors of opportunity."

Smithfield Foods, in partnership with [Wayne Community College](#), was recognized by the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges as an apprenticeship champion in the Workforce Development Pinnacle Awards. These awards recognize exemplary employers, businesses or industry groups that have demonstrated extraordinary engagement and firm commitment to the education and professional development of its employees and the development of North Carolina's workforce through partnerships with community colleges.

"Providing valuable professional development experiences is key to opening doors of opportunity and cultivating the next-generation talent pipeline," said Jay Bennett, chief human resources officer for Smithfield Foods. "We are grateful for our partnership with Wayne Community College and this recognition for our continued commitment to developing and accelerating fulfilling careers through quality education opportunities."

Smithfield and Wayne Community College collaborated to develop a customized apprenticeship model that would revolutionize Smithfield's view of training and would set the company and its employees on a trajectory to workforce success. This experiential and classroom learning model is utilized by seven other community colleges in six states to train over 70 other apprentices working at 23 Smithfield facilities.

"Five years ago, Smithfield Foods came to Wayne Community College with a need to develop a pipeline for maintenance technicians," said Kristie Sauls, executive director of apprenticeships and career development for Wayne Community College. "This partnership has been a game changer for Smithfield, WCC, and the apprentices we serve. Being able to recognize the work Smithfield is doing here in North Carolina and across the nation is an honor because they see the need and value of the program."

The AACC also named Smithfield and Wayne Community College as a finalist in the awards of excellence category for an outstanding college and corporate partnership. This award honors collaboration between a college and corporate partner that has achieved demonstrable, multi-year success in advancing the mission of the institution, the economic prosperity of a community, region or the nation and the learning excellence of students.

Smithfield is committed to developing the next generation of leaders by supporting education in local communities and recently [donated \\$1 million](#) to launch the Southeastern Education and Economic Development (SEED) apprenticeship program to provide career pathways and college education for high school students in North Carolina.

View the North Carolina State Board of Community College awards video [here](#). Learn more about Smithfield's philanthropic efforts [here](#) and career opportunities [here](#).

## About Smithfield Foods, Inc.

Headquartered in Smithfield, Virginia, since 1936, [Smithfield Foods, Inc.](#) is a U.S. food company that employs more than 54,000 people in seven countries and partners with thousands of American farmers. As one of the world's leading vertically integrated protein companies, we are dedicated to producing "Good food.

Responsibly.®" to feed a growing world population. We have pioneered [sustainability standards](#) for more than two decades, including our industry-leading commitments to become carbon negative in our U.S. company-owned operations and reduce GHG emissions 30% across our entire U.S. value chain by 2030. We believe in the power of protein to end food insecurity and have donated hundreds of millions of food servings to food banks, disaster relief efforts and community outreach programs in all 50 U.S. states. Smithfield boasts a portfolio of high-quality iconic [brands](#), such as Smithfield®, Eckrich®, Gwaltney® and Nathan's Famous®, among many

others. For more information, visit [www.smithfieldfoods.com](http://www.smithfieldfoods.com) and connect with us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), formerly known as Twitter, [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Threads](#).

### **About Wayne Community College**

Wayne Community College is a public, learning-centered institution with an open-door admission policy located in Goldsboro, N.C. As it works to develop a highly skilled and competitive workforce, the college serves around 10,000 individuals annually as well as businesses, industry, and community organizations with high quality, affordable, accessible learning opportunities, including more than 150 college credit programs. WCC's mission is to meet the educational, training, and cultural needs of the communities it serves.

SOURCE Smithfield Foods, Inc.

For further information: Ray Atkinson, Smithfield Foods, Inc., (757) 576-1383, [ratkinson@smithfield.com](mailto:ratkinson@smithfield.com)

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