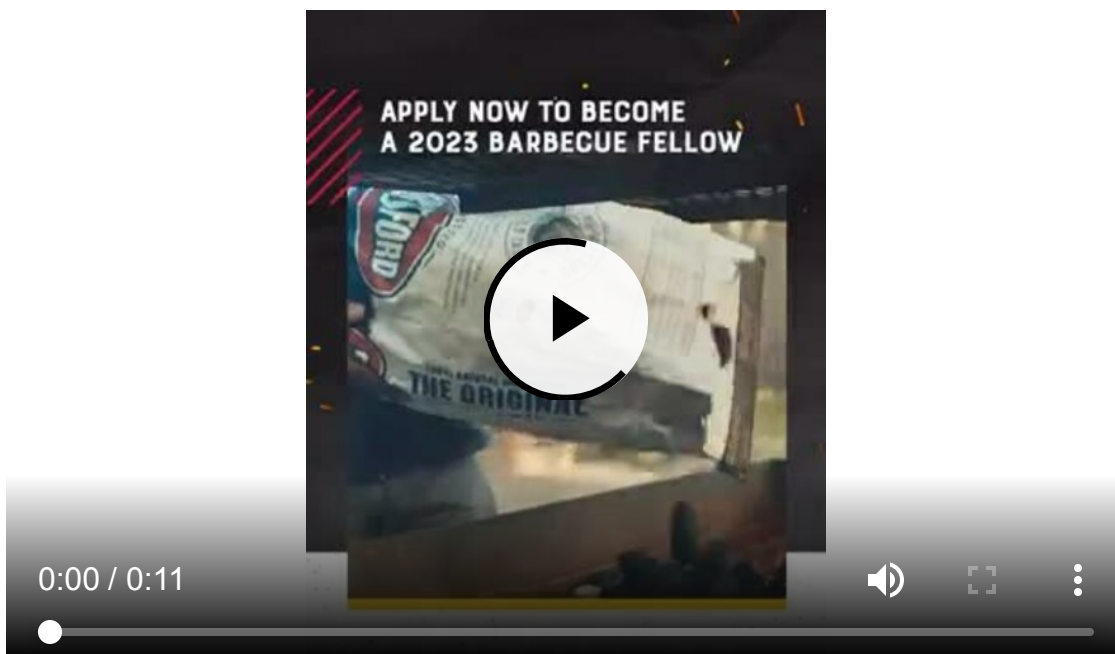


KINGSFORD® OPENS APPLICATIONS FOR THIRD YEAR OF PRESERVE THE PIT® FELLOWSHIP

Kingsford continues commitment to preserve and celebrate the Black barbecue community through mentorship program that pairs entrepreneurs with industry leaders

OAKLAND, Calif., Feb. 28, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Kingsford, a leader in barbecue for more than 100 years, announced the opening of the application period for its third class of Preserve the Pit fellows. The program reinforces the brand's commitment to the preservation of Black barbecue culture and fueling of its future. Six aspiring barbecue professionals will be selected to experience mentorship and receive business support.



Kingsford's Preserve the Pit which began in 2021, aims to bring awareness to the cultural history of Black barbecue and amplify the stories of entrepreneurs across the industry including farmers, pitmasters, packagers and more. Since its inception, nine fellows have received the mentorship and support needed to elevate their small businesses.

"Kingsford is proud to welcome another class of entrepreneurs to the fellowship and celebrate the rich history of Black barbecue culture," said Ram Gopalakrishnan, marketing director at Kingsford. "In today's ever-evolving business environment, making relationships and the sharing of knowledge via mentorship and industry connections is more important than ever. As a brand built on community and celebrating togetherness, we're honored to fuel these

connections and support these entrepreneurs."

This year, six fellows will receive immersive training, capital investment and one-on-one mentorship with our mentor network composed of industry leaders and experts including:

- Dr. Howard Conyers: pitmaster and educator on the history of Southern barbecue who will help Kingsford revive stories of Black barbecue and inspire others to make an impact in the barbecue community.
- Kevin Bludso: chef, television personality, and author of one of New York Times Best Cookbooks of 2022. His small takeout BBQ stand in Compton, California, now Bludso's BBQ, has since grown into an international empire, with locations in Hollywood and Melbourne, Australia.
- Devita Davison: executive director of FoodLab, a nonprofit organization that fosters the creation of an equitable local food economy by providing food entrepreneurs with education, peer-to-peer mentoring, and access to market opportunities.
- Rashad Jones: owner of Big Lee's BBQ food truck and the current reigning "Master of 'Cue." He was inspired by his wife's uncle, Leon Archie — nicknamed "Big Lee" — and his special blend of barbecue and hospitality at his wife's family home in Greenwood, Mississippi.
- Bryan Furman: award-winning pitmaster known for locally sourced, fresh Georgia-grown produce with a blend of unique ingredients. Also, soon-to-be owner of Bryan Furman BBQ, which will be opening soon in Atlanta.
- Amy Mills: owner of 17th Street Barbecue, Faye, and OnCue Consulting, the only barbecue business consultancy in the world, offering seminars and training in the culinary techniques behind great barbecue.
- Pat Neely: owner of Neely's BBQ, which eventually grew to 5 locations, and was named the Best BBQ in Memphis. He is a respected cookbook author with numerous New York Times best-sellers including Down Home with the Neelys.
- Rasheed Philips: chef, entrepreneur, owner of Philips Barbeque Co. and the newest mentor for Preserve the Pit. He loves sharing his knowledge with others to help them along their business journey.

The new class along with their mentors will come together at this year's Memphis in May World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest in Memphis, Tennessee.

"The roots of barbecue are based in community and culture, and are at the core of Preserve the Pit," said Dr. Howard Conyers. "As my work in barbecue evolves, I am proud to continue working with Kingsford to provide a place to honor these individuals who are doing amazing work and to help them flourish and create generational businesses."

Those interested in the fellowship are invited to review the eligibility requirements and apply now through March 31, 2023, with the third class of fellows being announced in April 2023. No purchase is necessary to apply or participate. Kingsford and its mentor network will select the 2023 class of fellows based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, their connection to barbecue, contributions to the legacy of the Black barbecue community and commitments to fueling its future. Through the immersive mentorship process, the fellows will:

- Learn industry skills with hands-on and immersive training.
- Get counsel from a network of advisors and other business resources.
- Create lasting relationships with key leaders and experts in the industry.
- Receive capital investment to kick-start their business.

To apply to the Preserve the Pit fellowship or to learn more about the fellowship, visit [PreserveThePit.com](https://www.PreserveThePit.com). Follow Kingsford on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and www.kingsford.com to stay up to date on the latest company news and offerings.

About Kingsford

The Kingsford Products Company is a wholly owned subsidiary of **The Clorox Company**, headquartered in Oakland, Calif.

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