

State Alumni Coordinator Guide





SkillsUSA's Alumni and Friends Executive Board was organized in 1984 to oversee and promote the activities and contributions of the millions of former SkillsUSA members. This group is directed and assisted by the SkillsUSA staff. For questions about the alumni program, please contact any member of the SkillsUSA and Friends Executive Board, or call the national headquarters at 703-777-8810.

For a list of the SkillsUSA and Friends Executive Board members and the latest SkillsUSA Alumni information, go to: *www.skillsusa.org*.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Quality Standards	4
State Alumni Coordinator	5
SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Executive Board	5
SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association	5
Privileges of the Alumni State Coordinator	6
Membership Affiliation and Reporting	6
Event Planning Resources	6
Event Ideas for Alumni Participation/Volunteering	7
Suggested Calendar of State Alumni Events	7
Networking and Alumni Professional Development Opportunities	8
Alumni Membership Development	8
Communications, Image and Media	8
SkillsUSA Online Resources	8
Getting Started At a Glance	9



Quality Standards of an Alumni Association

A state alumni association is a collaboration of SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends who come together for the purpose of providing guidance, support, resources, talents, and infrastructure capability for the state associations.

- A. **Guidance:** Goals and Objectives — Program of Work
The SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association will establish a path on which state associations may be led; this will involve the formation of measurable goals along with personal and professional growth.
- B. **Support:** The SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association will establish a cooperative relationship with state associations to develop plans for financial growth and stability, through marketing and budgeting funds. Once established, a state SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association will be able to function independently.
- C. **Resources:** The SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association will provide and encourage the pursuit of resources that will benefit members in their lifelong journey toward success. These resources should be offered to and used by all SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends members.
- D. **Talents:** The SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association will use the natural talents of its members to grow the organization's membership and promote its character. These talents can be used in a variety of ways, such as assisting with state events as well as establishing mentor programs.
- E. **Infrastructure:** The SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association will provide a basic framework from which state associations can grow and prosper. This framework will allow each state organization to match other state SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends associations. In establishing an infrastructure it is guaranteed that each state is organized similarly, resulting in a strong Alumni and Friends network nationwide.

State Alumni Coordinator

Your task as SkillsUSA state alumni coordinator is to oversee the operation of all aspects of the state alumni organization. These responsibilities can include:

- Office management
- Financial matters
- Alumni membership recruitment
- Industry contacts
- Marketing and public relations for alumni programs, events and activities

The following task analysis highlights the job of a state alumni coordinator.

1. Manage the state alumni association, and understand and interpret its purposes and goals.
2. Obtain funding and/or financing for state alumni activities and events.
3. Assist local school district personnel and students in becoming alumni members.
4. Gain the involvement of key people from business and industry or local communities.
5. Implement communication, marketing and public relations efforts for the alumni association.
6. Assist local or regional alumni chapters in your state and promote events.
7. Manage an annual state alumni event.
8. Work cooperatively with your SkillsUSA state association director.
9. Maintain an accurate alumni database.

State alumni coordinators can work directly with their SkillsUSA state association director and the national staff to help accomplish and guide alumni work in their state. They can also gain ideas and assistance from other alumni state coordinators.

As an alumni coordinator, you are encouraged to become actively involved with coordinators from other states. You and your colleagues can formulate and share ideas, bring issues to the table and reach consensus on vital issues that may affect the overall alumni organization.

SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Executive Board

The SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends executive board **is elected from and by registered alumni members.** A chair and a regional representative from each of the five SkillsUSA regions serve on the executive board.

The board works with the national headquarters staff to direct the efforts of the alumni association and is responsible for reporting to the SkillsUSA staff and to the board of directors as requested. Alumni state coordinators should consider a regional representative as his or her personal representative on important issues. The executive board meets two to three times per year in addition to monthly conference calls. Terms of the council members are two years.

SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association

Alumni are interested in helping because they've "been there." Moreover, many alumni have gained new insight from ideas of other former SkillsUSA members throughout the country and are willing to share ideas. The SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association is an organization of former students and professional members and friends affiliating with SkillsUSA Inc. either through a chartered state association or through direct membership.

Local alumni can play an important role in assisting the local teacher in maintaining and developing technical student activities that may or may not coincide with the instructional plan.

SkillsUSA state association directors depend heavily on alumni volunteers at their state events and their annual state SkillsUSA Championships.

Alumni have proven to be helpful at local, state, national and even international levels of SkillsUSA programs. Whether serving as a local program advisory committee member, a job placement reference or a volunteer at the local, state or national contests, or performing as a

guest speaker, alumni can, indeed, become a local SkillsUSA program's greatest strength.

The national headquarters can provide you with contact information for the alumni executive board, other state alumni coordinators, and other state association directors who have positive experiences with alumni activity.

Privileges of the Alumni State Coordinator

The following privileges apply to the state alumni association:

1. Use of the name, emblem and other official paraphernalia as outlined in official policies.
2. The right to secure and hold contracts in the name of the state alumni association.
3. The opportunity to participate in all official functions of the national organization.
4. The right of appeal and arbitration in matters that the state may not be in a position to decide.
5. The privilege to accept contributions from donors while ensuring tax benefits extended by federal and state statutes.
6. Access to a vast network of contacts in business, industry, government and organized labor developed through the collective good will of SkillsUSA and its state associations.

Membership Affiliation and Membership Reporting

Alumni membership is free. Those wishing to become a member of the alumni association should go to the website and register online.

The classes of membership recognized by the alumni association are:

Active Membership — Former student members, educators and other friends of SkillsUSA.

Honorary Life Membership Award — Individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of SkillsUSA and career and technical education whose membership has been approved by the SkillsUSA board of directors.

Lifetime Donation Memberships — While alumni membership is free, some alumni may choose to “donate” to the alumni association by purchasing a special lifetime membership of \$150.

An alumni state association could charge state or local dues. If so, each local, district or state association is responsible for setting and collecting its own alumni dues.

Alumni state coordinators are asked to support membership in their state by:

1. Conducting alumni membership campaigns at state events or in schools and entering memberships on the website.
2. Encouraging graduating seniors to become alumni.
3. Requesting and then carefully reviewing membership reports for accuracy.

Event Planning Resources

Being a state alumni coordinator means you will be doing a lot of event planning and volunteer coordinating. Use these websites as potential resources or research the Internet for more:

<http://smallbiztrends.com/2013/06/small-business-event-planning-tips.html>

www.northeastern.edu/events/downloads/Top%20Ten%20Tips%20for%20Planning%20an%20Event.pdf

www.talentonline.co.nz/func/event_planning_tips.html

Event Ideas for Alumni Participation/Volunteering:

- Hold a state alumni professional development day or conference
- Hold a state alumni reunion event
- Hold a homecoming social in the fall
- Conduct alumni social events at local restaurants, sporting events, etc.
- Volunteer at the State Leadership Conference and SkillsUSA Championships
- Volunteer at the State Fall Leadership Conference
- Volunteer to assist with state officer training or leadership training events for current members
- Volunteer at the National Leadership and Skills Conference
- Conduct alumni fundraising campaigns
- Mentor students

Suggested Calendar of State Alumni Events

It is very important to develop a calendar of state SkillsUSA alumni activities. It is these events that will create an active alumni base and program.

Fall

- Work closely with your SkillsUSA state association director to coordinate alumni efforts and volunteers for fall state events and activities
- Plan and conduct alumni membership efforts such as a booth or stand at SkillsUSA events
- Plan and conduct a fall alumni fundraiser
- Plan and conduct a fall alumni social event or professional development event
- Mail or email an alumni fall newsletter or update through social media or other methods
- Advertise state alumni awards

Winter

- Contact instructors and remind them to have graduating seniors register as alumni
- Work closely with your SkillsUSA state association director to coordinate alumni efforts and volunteers for the state leadership conference

- Plan a winter social or networking event for alumni
- Provide state alumni members information on national alumni events and opportunities
- Take nominations for state alumni awards

Spring

- Conduct alumni activities at the state leadership conference such as a social/networking event or a professional development event
- Honor state alumni award winners
- Coordinate and manage alumni volunteers at the state leadership conference
- Host an alumni exhibit booth and recruit alumni members
- Host an alumni hospitality area at the state leadership conference
- Provide state alumni members information on national alumni events and opportunities

Summer

- Attend the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference as alumni volunteer and to participate in special alumni events and activities
- Plan a summer alumni social event
- Attend SkillsUSA state alumni coordinator conference

Activity Assessment

After each event, it is important to take the time to assess and reflect.

1. What aspects of the activity were successful?
2. What aspects of the activity were not successful?
3. What needs to be done differently next time?
4. What needs to stay the same?

Networking and Alumni Professional Development Opportunities

One of the top reasons alumni join and become active in an alumni association is the opportunity to network for continued career building.

As a state alumni coordinator, create professional development opportunities for your members. These can be done through a webinar series or live events held throughout your state. Consider involving business and industry representatives to host and conduct short workshops on professional development skills such as:

- Job Searching
- Networking
- Job Interviewing
- Relocating for a Job
- Financial Planning
- Public Speaking
- Social/Etiquette Skills
- Communication Skills
- Writing Skills
- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Team Building

Try to host networking events where local industry representatives can socialize with alumni in a more casual atmosphere.

Alumni Membership Development

An effective membership campaign begins with a good plan of action and an enthusiastic SkillsUSA alumni coordinator and volunteers. Consider forming a team to help in this effort. Use active and enthusiastic advisors, past state officers and other SkillsUSA alumni.

Consider your potential customers and tailor your SkillsUSA advertising campaign to make it attractive to them. Show how SkillsUSA can provide a way for alumni to accomplish their goals, increase their professional skills, give back and have fun networking and socializing with other alumni.

Visit local chapters in your state to market the alumni and all it can do for students after graduation. Use videos of previous activities from state events or national events and let other alumni talk about their experiences. The focus of these visits should be practical and motivational. Explain the benefits of remaining connected to SkillsUSA after graduation. Have graduating seniors sign up on the spot!

Communications, Image and Media

Effective communication between you and the alumni membership in your state is very important. The members will need to know what is happening in their state in a timely manner. As state alumni events and deadlines approach, send reminders and notices to the alumni membership. Plus, as alumni news and information is processed from the national headquarters, you must discern what needs to be passed on to state alumni members — and then pass it on.

Most state alumni coordinators communicate through a state alumni newsletter, a website or social media such as a state alumni Facebook page. Many also communicate via email. Establish a constant and consistent flow of information to let your alumni know they are part of an active organization.

SkillsUSA Online Resources

SkillsUSA's website has valuable resources that can provide ideas for membership, brochures, marketing and more:

www.skillsusa.org/about/start-a-chapter/suggested-resources/

Getting Started at a Glance

Creating an alumni chapter is not a long or difficult process, but it is easier when more than one or two individuals are willing to assist.

The first step in establishing a new alumni chapter is to identify a small group of alumni (three to five) to help organize it. This group will determine the officers, ensure that events are planned and see that the membership roster of the alumni chapter is maintained.

Once the officers are determined, it is time to start thinking about a kickoff event. This event could be a mid-week reception at a location that is easily accessible for alumni. Hotels, country clubs, restaurants and museums are examples of possible locations. Each city will have different options that will work as well. The reception will allow alumni in the area to meet each other, hear what is happening with SkillsUSA and provide alumni chapter officers with ideas and suggestions for future events.

After the kickoff event, the officers should start thinking about future events based on the ideas and suggestions from other alumni. Three or four events a year is typically enough. More events often require too much time, while fewer events make it more difficult to establish continuity within the membership. Possible future events can include:

- Family picnic
- Sporting event
- Holiday parties
- Winery tour
- Museum tour
- Luncheon with a guest speaker
- Golf tournament



In keeping with a tradition of respect for the individuality of our members and our role in workforce development, SkillsUSA strives to ensure inclusive participation in all of our programs, partnerships and employment opportunities.

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